

The Ecological Society of America

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Director of Energy Research
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Dear Dr. Krebs,

The Office of Health and Environmental Research (OHER) of the Department of Energy is a major supporter of basic research in ecology and ecosystem science. The Ecological Society of America is a professional organization with over 7,000 members who specialize in the science of ecology. As its President, I am concerned for the future of our discipline and for our ability to provide science-based assessments of environmental consequences of energy development and use. I am concerned because of the budget cuts being proposed in environmental basic research programs at OHER.


The community of ecological scientists is dismayed by the proposed evisceration of these research programs that are at the leading edge of the fields of ecosystem sciences and environmental biology. These programs support basic research at universities and at national labs and contribute to building a basis for rational energy policy development and decision making as well as training students in these disciplines. Hence the proposed cuts will severely impact the current environmental research establishment as well as the future generation of environmental scientists.

DOE/OHER has long been a leader in basic research in ecological sciences. Research supported by OHER has contributed greatly to the development of a conceptual framework for the field of theoretical ecology and contributed to developing the underlying principles of ecosystem science. This research has made possible science-based evaluations of environmental impacts of energy development.

In recent years, DOE has strongly supported the active collaboration of NSF, NOAA and other Federal agencies in developing multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional research programs focused on key problems associated with the use of energy. Many of these multi-faceted programs are now highly productive, and this is not the time to pull back and destroy the investment that has gone in to creating these research teams.

I urge the Department of Energy to support the continuation of funding for ecosystem sciences and environmental biology research. There is critical need for continuity of the multi-institutional programs that DOE has been able to establish. These programs are the means by which very complex earth systems can be studied so that basic principles of their structure and function can be elucidated. Without this integrated knowledge, there can be little basis in science for rational policy development and decision making.

Sincerely,


Judy L. Meyer
President