

June 22, 2006

Dr. Mary E. Lidstrom  
Jungers Professor of Engineering and Professor of Microbiology  
Vice Provost for Research  
Office of Research  
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RE: Resolution of Reconsideration of Proposal 0528025

Dear Dr. Lidstrom:

I am in receipt of your letter of June 14, 2006. In that letter the University of Washington commits to providing the additional funding needed to complete a conceptual design report for "DUSEL-Cascades." The scope of work described in your letter, however, clearly differs from the scope of work described in proposal PHY0528025, *Conceptual Design Proposal: The Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory – Cascades, A Horizontal-Access Facility*. Consequently, the condition for making an award based on my reconsideration of PHY0528025 has not been met, and I am unable to approve the granting of the \$500,000 award to the University of Washington.<sup>[1]</sup>

Proposal PHY0528025 concerned the development of a conceptual design report for a DUSEL located under Cashmere Mountain. As stated in the Project Summary, "The DUSEL-Cascades collaboration proposes to develop a dedicated, horizontal-access Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory by tunneling under Cashmere Mountain within the Mt. Stuart batholith, Chelan County, WA." Pioneer Tunnel played a very minor role in that proposal. Approximately 5% of the proposed budget is attributed to work at the Pioneer Tunnel, and that only to provide information perceived to be relevant to the Cashmere Mountain site. Page 3 of the Budget Justification describes the limited role of Pioneer Tunnel in the proposal's scope of work: "We believe the stress-field results obtained (via Pioneer Tunnel) will be instructive for other sites within the batholith, including Cashmere Mountain; this is the primary motivation."

As importantly, Pioneer Tunnel is not presented as an alternative site in the original DUSEL proposal. Specifically, the proposal's discussion of "Potential of the Cascades Site to Meet Technical Requirements" mentions the Cascade and Pioneer tunnels as follows: "As discussed in Section 6, the Cascade and Pioneer tunnels provide access to a second site of intermediate depth that would be suitable for a future long-baseline neutrino detector." Page 5, Proposal No. 0528025. Section 6 further states, "The construction of a large underground detector for superbeam long-baseline neutrino studies and nucleon decay is a key future goal for US underground science. This project

is distinct from DUSEL because of its size (perhaps \$650m) and timing (construction starting sometime after DUSEL is operational). It will be funded separately from DUSEL and likely by a different agency.” Clearly, the shift of focus from Cashmere Mountain to Pioneer Tunnel presents a different proposal from the proposal I reviewed in response to your request for reconsideration; what you are now proposing was not subject to NSF’s merit review process.

Your letter of June 14, 2006 and the University of Washington Press Release of June 20, 2006 clarify that the work the University committed to fund is distinctly different from that set forth in the proposal you submitted to NSF. NSF appreciates that the University has candidly acknowledged that it no longer views a DUSEL at Cashmere Mountain to be the focus of its proposal. But the original proposal was for a Cashmere Mountain DUSEL, and that is what I reviewed in response to your request for reconsideration. Consequently, I am unable to approve the \$500,000 award to the University of Washington for the completion of a conceptual design report for DUSEL-Cascades. Given NSF’s reconsideration process and the unmet condition for funding your proposal, the decision not to proceed with an S2 award is a final agency action.

We anticipate issuing the next DUSEL solicitation (S3) later this year. The S3 process will provide a peer-reviewed competition of all proposed sites for the purpose of identifying the most promising site to be funded for development of a full DUSEL technical plan. As I stated in my June 12, 2006 letter, this stage of DUSEL competition will be open to all. If the University of Washington chooses to submit a proposal in response to Solicitation 3 for a Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory, that proposal will receive full consideration from the National Science Foundation.

Thank you for your timely and forthright management of this matter.

Sincerely,

Judith S. Sunley  
Acting Assistant Director  
Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences

cc: Dr. Wick C. Haxton

[1] In response to your request for reconsideration, I reviewed the record and determined that error had been committed in connection with the initial review of your proposal. Though your request for reconsideration was granted, NSF’s Grant Policy Manual

expressly states that, “NSF cannot ensure proposers that reconsideration will result in an award even if error is established in connection with the initial review.” In this matter, I determined that an award was appropriate, contingent on “NSF receiving a letter of commitment from other sources for the additional funding that you represented was necessary to *complete the work set forth in the proposal.*”