

Dear Editor:

I wish to call the attention of your readers to their own and the nation's technological and economic interests. The 250 or so particle physicists of the United States have again launched a raid on the national treasury for a superconducting supercollider (SSC). This time they want only about \$6 billion in capital costs and perhaps as much as \$1 billion *per year* in interest on the additional debt and the operating costs. The administration thinks offering magical science of this type to the public can bail it out of its political hole. Of course, the pure porkbarrel aspect of bringing a few jobs for a few years for one locality is not lost on all the silly states "competing" for the job.

The chances of the SSC actually being built are not good if we act to stop it now.

Utterly preposterous claims are being made for its value. "It will have spinoffs, discoveries and innovations that will profoundly touch every human being." Exactly the opposite is true: nothing it will or can produce will have ANY effect on 99.99999% of human beings. It is "another

clear sign that we are committed to keeping this nation at the cutting edge of world leadership and competitiveness" (Energy Department Secretary J. Herrington, January 30, 1987). It is sheer lunacy to say the SSC helps our competitiveness.

If you believe that \$6 billion should be spent in very different ways to improve our competitiveness (or for other goals), write immediately to your governor, congressperson and two senators, with copies to Energy Secretary Herrington, Department of Energy. The arguments against the SSC are sharp and clear:

- It will direct very short R&D resources to a tiny corner of science which is totally disconnected from the real needs of U.S. technology.

- R&D budgets are a zero-sum game. There is no way the SSC will not hurt materials RDT&E. (William Carey, Executive Director of AAAS and formerly with the Office of Management and Budget, is on record on this.)

- It will divert personnel from much more important projects.

- It can have no "spinoffs" related to industry. It lives on "spin-ins" from all other sciences and technologies. Arno Penzias, Nobel Laureate in Physics, vice president of AT&T Bell Laboratories is the champion opponent on this.

- It loses the United States a major chance not only to save money but engender international cooperation by building it in Japan or Europe, or even in the United States after a decade or two of collaboration among equals.

- With the new materials technology breakthroughs on superconductors, postponing a decision for 5-10 years is obviously essential as the absolute minimum.

The materials community has shown in the case of the Berkeley NCAM fiasco that it can stop more than average nonsense. Let's do it again. Contact your Congresspersons, Senators and Governors now.

Rustum Roy

Evan Pugh Professor of the Solid State
Pennsylvania State University

SECTION NEWS

North Texas Section Talks Garbage

The featured speaker at the April meeting of the North Texas Materials Characterization Society, Dr. Kenneth Daugherty, spoke in both seriousness and humor on "Garbage to Energy with Decreased Pollution." Daugherty is Distinguished Professor in the Department of Chemistry at North Texas State University.

For the past six years, one of Daugherty's research areas has been investigating the combustion of Municipal Solid Waste (garbage) in order to produce energy, miti-

gate environmental concerns, and work toward a landfill-free United States. More than 200 million tons of MSW are produced annually in the United States, each ton the energy equivalent of more than one barrel of oil. Daugherty described his development plans and progress to date.

The following meetings and events were announced:

June 1, 1987—AVS, ECS, MRS Joint Symposium.

August 12, 1987—Pool party. Walter Duncan from Texas Instruments will speak about optical characterization.

December 16, 1987—Annual dinner

meeting. Russ Pinizzotto of North Texas State University will speak about materials in music.

For information about any of the above activities or about the North Texas Materials Characterization Society, contact:

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MRS Student Chapter or Section in your area?*

Contact MRS Headquarters for information.

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