

San Francisco, California
March 17, 1977

Dr. James Schlesinger
National Energy Policy Recommendations
P.O. Box 2892
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Dr. Schlesinger:

It comes as something of a surprise to receive a letter from you asking for input concerning energy. For some seven years, three of which were while I was at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, I have been trying very hard to give you and others in government advice concerning energy--- all of which, though totally rebuffed, has stood the test of time and events exceedingly well. Indeed, I know of no case where work on this subject has not stood the test of time and events.

My prediction is that your energy policy has a vastly greater chance of success if you will add one ingredient to your programs, namely, give yourself a chance to receive some decent input on energy from the sources which have generally proved correct, but which, like myself, have been routinely rebuffed.

In the ERDA, you have a carryover of hacks, public relations flaks, sycophants, and incompetents, all of which are largely from the AEC and they dominate the ERDA staff.

They have routinely downplayed all the problems of nuclear power, particularly the hazards of ionizing radiation. Two years ago I provided two papers giving a new perspective on plutonium toxicity, work which I did on my own, not receiving one cent in support from any source whatever for the work. ERDA became so fearful that five National Laboratories set groups of scientists to work attempting to discredit my work. Their resultant effort is a disgrace, in terms of the scientific quality of their critiques. I reject with ease each and every one of their points, and have submitted my answer to the GESMO Hearings of the NRC. If my work is so poor, why five labs required to try, pathetically, to refute it? To the credit of one of the labs, the Los Alamos Lab, they ended their report by simply admitting my work was "speculative and imaginative" and that it could not be refuted within existing evidence.

It required a year of hearings for your then-existing AEC to try to refute the work of the Union of Concerned Scientists on reactor safety, and what an unsuccessful job AEC did. During those hearings, you had to remind people within the National Labs that it was permissible to tell the truth.

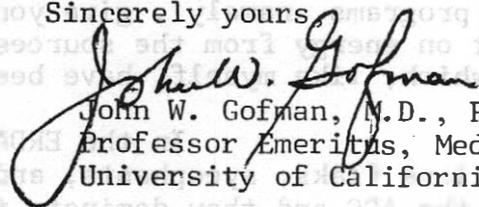
In 1970, 1971, several of us seriously concerned about energy supplies, advocated strongly that solar power be rapidly developed. The response at AEC and in other government circles was ridicule. Yet today ERDA is forced to rank solar energy as one of three top priority future energy sources of the unlimited type.

I could quote for you numerous other examples to show that all the innovative thinking has come from outside government. There is every reason to doubt that the situation will be different in the future.

Therefore, I suggest that you give yourself a chance in the future to get some worthwhile input. Instead of fighting the critics, and thereby sinking into the grave of hopelessly lost credibility, you should set up a program of financial support for 100 "outsiders" to serve as critical consultants to the energy program. Even at \$25000 per year per critical consultant, the cost would be the miniscule amount of \$2,500,000 per year. It would be the best investment in energy you could make for the country, provided you expect critical evaluation, not compliance from those who serve as critical consultants. You need an on-going serious look at "the other side of the question" on energy issues, not sycophants.

I take seriously your position that you truly hope to help solve our energy problems. I can give you no better help or advice than my proposal above. And I shall be able to gauge the prospects by the response to proposals such as mine and other really constructive suggestions.

Sincerely yours



John W. Gofman, M.D., Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Medical Physics
University of California, Berkeley

cc: President Jimmy Carter

Enc: The Plutonium Controversy from the Journal of the American Medical Association