

September 7, 1962

→ Dr. James B. Harger^t
President's Scientific Advisory Committee
The White House
Washington, D. C.

(Biology)

Dear Jim:

During the past months I have been very much alarmed about the implications that the House Appropriations Committee's pressure on the NIH for "improved business management" may have for the conduct of biological and medical research in this country. Until recently this concern was more abstract; however, it is just an illustration of its possible impact that one of my own recent applications for NIH support, having been approved with respect to its scientific merits by the appropriate study section, was returned by the Council for further information, primarily with regard to budgetary details. Conservatively, it would have to estimate that it took a full week of my time to collect and restate the material asked for, and together with the long time delays involved in the repeated referral of such an application, this kind of thing threatens to become a very serious impediment to the conduct of scientific research. I realize that the NIH has, in the past, followed its own inclinations and devices in its relationships with Congress, but the present situation seems to me too alarming to be ignored by PSAC, in view of the serious potential threat to the mechanism of federal support of science, based on mutual confidence.

PSAC

I believe that NIH's current administrative policy is based on the directions of the House Appropriations Committee following the recent hearings where Dr. Shannon and other NIH representatives testified. I would like to bring these to your attention, with the hope that the matter may also be brought home to PSAC. I would also appreciate it if you could get this testimony and report for me as printed in the record.

Cordially,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL:edf