

Universities Research Association Inc, a consortium of 60 universities that operates Fermilab. He also pledged to make "major reassignments" within the 3200-member staff to ensure that Brookhaven abides by environmental regulations while continuing to produce exemplary science.

Among the most important issues confronting DOE, BSA and Marburger is the fate of HFBR, which has been closed since late 1996. The decision on reopening the reactor, where the leaking fuel rod holding pool led to the search for a new contractor (see PHYSICS TODAY, May 1997, page 45), will be put off until at least February 1999. That is about the time when Brookhaven's newest facility, the Relativistic

Heavy Ion Collider, should come on line.

HFBR began operating in 1965, first at 40 MW and was then upgraded to 60 MW. It was later authorized to run at no higher than 30 MW. Many scientists are now eager for it to be restarted as soon as possible and to attain 60 MW rapidly to produce intense beams of neutrons for today's experiments in nuclear and solid-state physics, materials science, biology and chemistry. But two New York politicians, Senator Alfonse D'Amato and Representative Michael Forbes, contend that the aging reactor is an environmental and health hazard that should be shut down permanently.

Secretary Peña says he will not make a decision about HFBR until he has the

results of an environmental impact statement procedure that is scheduled to be completed late this year. He met with BSA members on 10 December, and they endorsed his intention to allow additional time for public comments on HFBR from Long Islanders. Peña's timetable also will allow him to hold off until after the election in November, when D'Amato and Forbes go to the voters with their complaints about HFBR and Brookhaven.

Considering all the problems he faces, Marburger told reporters at his first press conference as Brookhaven's director-in-waiting that he was prepared for some rough times. "I don't have any illusions," he said. "The next year will be difficult."

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## In Literally the Last Act for Fiscal 1998, Congress Increases R&D Funds for NIST and NOAA

After a sputtering of six continuing resolutions made necessary by fitful arguments over whether to allow the Census Bureau to use sampling techniques in the year 2000, Congress passed the last of the 13 appropriations bills for fiscal 1998. The vote came late on the night of 13 November and both houses then recessed for the year. The legislation covered funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State, including the Census Bureau and two major R&D agencies—the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NIST and NOAA emerged from the funding whirligig better than had been expected, considering that many Republicans had placed the Commerce Department on their hit list to abolish when they took control of the House in January 1995.

The bill provided a total of \$677.9 million for NIST, which represented a boost of 17% over fiscal 1997. Much of the increase is the result of a \$95 million appropriation to renovate NIST's R&D facilities in Colorado and Maryland. The agency had requested funds for the past few years to upgrade aging facilities and to build a new advanced measurements lab, but Congress had been reluctant to commit any money without detailed plans and even rescinded unspent funds from appropriations made in previous years. In the fiscal 1998 budget cycle, Congress changed its mind and funded much more than the Clinton Administration's request of \$17 million; even so, actually spending the other \$78 million is contingent on NIST submitting a building plan that is acceptable to Congress.

### Additional Bottom Lines: Physics-Related R&D Budgets for Fiscal 1998

|                                                              | FY 97<br>actual | FY 98<br>request | FY 98<br>enacted | Percentage<br>gain (loss)<br>1997-1998 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------|
| (millions of dollars)                                        |                 |                  |                  |                                        |
| <b>National Institute of Standards and Technology</b>        | 581.0           | 692.5            | 677.9            | 16.7                                   |
| Scientific and technical research and services               | 268.0           | 276.9            | 271.9            | 1.5                                    |
| Advanced Technology Program                                  | 224.9           | 275.6            | 192.5            | (14.4)                                 |
| Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program                  | 95.0            | 123.4            | 113.5            | 19.5                                   |
| Construction of facilities                                   | 0.0             | 16.7             | 95.0             | —                                      |
| <b>National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration</b> | 1910.8          | 1989.6           | 2002.1           | 4.8                                    |
| Oceanic and atmospheric research                             | 253.2           | 248.1            | 277.7            | 9.7                                    |
| Climate and air quality, including global change             | 109.9           | 118.8            | 114.8            | 4.5                                    |
| Atmospheric program, including solar research                | 43.5            | 43.5             | 47.5             | 9.2                                    |
| Sea Grant Program                                            | 54.3            | 50.2             | 56.0             | 3.1                                    |
| Undersea Research Program                                    | 12.0            | 5.4              | 15.5             | 29.2                                   |

Among the agency's programs, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership fared best, with a 19.5% increase. NIST's traditional scientific, measurement and research services got a 3.3% rise—on paper at least. In fact, though, the core laboratory program got no increase because of the venerable practice of earmarking. For instance, the House-Senate conference agreement directed NIST to spend \$3.8 million for wind engineering research conducted at Texas Tech University and \$5 million for a cooperative agreement with Montana State University for research on building technologies that apply natural resources and environmentally sound procedures. After signing the appropriations bill on 26 November, President Clinton used his line-item veto to strike the Montana State allocation. By doing this, Clinton reduced the core research line from \$276.9 million to \$271.9 million—leaving a paltry 1.5%

increase this year.

Funding for the controversial Advanced Technology Program, which has been labeled "corporate welfare" by some in Congress, is down 14.4%, to \$192.5 million. The Administration sought to increase ATP funding by 22%, to \$275.5 million. While most of this year's appropriation is designated for continued support of awards made in prior years, \$82 million is for new awards. NIST officials hailed two Maryland politicians, Senator Barbara Mikulski, a Democrat, and Representative Connie Morella, a Republican, for pushing for the new awards.

Within the same bill, NOAA is given a total of \$2 billion, an increase of 4.8% over last year. All of the agency's programs went up. The biggest winner is the Undersea Research Program, which got a 29.2% hike. The Sea Grant program fared least well, with an increase of 3.1%, a tad more than the rate of inflation.

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