U.S. Department of Energy
and the
National Science Foundation

July 17, 2006

Professor Robert E. Tribble
Chair, DOE/NSF Nuclear Science Advisory Committee
Cyclotron Institute
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843

Dear Professor Tribble:

This letter requests that the Nuclear Science Advisory Committee (NSAC) assemble a Committee of Visitors (COV) to review the management processes of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Nuclear Physics in the Office of Science. The panel should provide an assessment of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend and document proposal actions and monitor active projects and programs for both the DOE laboratory and university programs.

The panel should assess the operations of the Office's programs during the fiscal years 2004, 2005, and 2006. The panel should examine any files from this period for both DOE laboratory and university programs. The panel should consider and provide evaluation of the following major elements:

(a) the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the processes used to solicit, review, recommend, and document proposal actions;
(b) the monitoring of active projects and programs;
(c) within the boundaries defined by DOE missions and available funding, how the award process has affected the breadth and depth of the Nuclear Physics portfolio elements; and
(d) the national and international standing of the portfolio elements.

In addition, comments on observed strengths or deficiencies in any component or sub-component of the Office's portfolio, and suggestions for improvement, would be very valuable. The panel should also comment upon what progress has been made towards addressing action items from the previous COV Review. You should work with the Associate Director of the Office of Science for Nuclear Physics to establish the processes and procedures to enable the first COV to meet before the end of the 2006 calendar year. The results of this assessment should be documented in a report, with "Findings", "Comments", and "Recommendations", clearly articulated. The report should be submitted by February 28, 2007.

We appreciate NSAC's willingness to take on this important task, and look forward to learning of your evaluation of the performance of the Office of Nuclear Physics.

Sincerely,

Dennis Kovar
Associate Director of the Office of Science
for Nuclear Physics
Department of Energy

Judith S. Sunley
Acting Assistant Director
Mathematical and Physical Sciences
National Science Foundation