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Honorable Frank Press
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Frank:

This letter is in response to the question you posed recently when we discussed the NASA decision to terminate Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Packages (ALSEP's) monitoring at the end of September 1977. You asked specifically what we were trading ALSEP for. Since our discussion, I have received a briefing from Dr. Noel Hinners with regard to the ALSEP decision.

The decision to terminate monitoring of the science data being returned by the ALSEP's was based on a review of the results that could be expected from an additional year of operation versus the needs for funds in other lunar program areas. As you are aware, the collection and analysis of data from most of the ALSEP instruments have been completed. The seismic and heat flow instruments are the only ones that have been monitored in the past year and that could be monitored profitably in the future. A comparison of results that could be expected from an additional year of monitoring the seismic stations with results that could be achieved by bolstering the declining funds of the lunar sample analysis program resulted in the present decision. In essence, the ALSEP funds were traded for a sustained lunar sample analysis program. We also examined the OSS program to determine if the required funds were available (approximately \$1M) what would be the competing programs. Our conclusion was that science

instrument development and flight program needs would be of a higher priority than ALSEP.

I am aware of the great contribution which the ALSEP experiments, and the seismology experiments in particular, have made to our understanding of the Moon and to our knowledge of our solar system. They were certainly one of the most successful experiments which NASA has conducted. I am convinced that the decision, with which I concur, was made carefully and in the context of the total lunar program.

Very truly yours,

Original Signed By
Robert A. Frosch
Administrator

bcc: A, AA, AD, AEM-3
S, SD, SS, SL

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