



29 January 2008

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Chairman
House Energy and Water Development Subcommittee
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing on behalf of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - United States Activities (IEEE-USA) to express our deepest concern that, despite prior indications of support by the President and Congress, the Fiscal Year 2008 omnibus funding measure passed in December contains zero funding for the US contribution to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project.

On January 4, 2008, twenty leaders in the U.S. fusion community sent a letter to you requesting that funding be provided for continued U.S. participation in ITER. IEEE-USA strongly supports this request. As you well know, the ITER project objective is to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy for peaceful purposes. Success on ITER will be an historic achievement for mankind, bringing the dream to harness the power of the sun one step closer.

The importance of the ITER mission to the future of mankind is evidenced by participation of all the major industrial nations of the world including the US, Europe, Russia, China, Korea, Japan, and India. US participation in ITER is the centerpiece of the US fusion research program whose importance to the future of the nation and the world has never been greater. The ratification of the ITER international agreement in 2007 and subsequent commitments made by the US and other parties served to launch this flagship project with strong momentum. To abdicate our commitment to participate in the ITER program would have a devastating effect not only on the ITER project but on the nation's credibility as an international science participant.

We would suggest the US and its international partners continue to discuss the future direction of the ITER project to determine the appropriate funding levels. It is essential that the US continue its participation in ITER at a meaningful level and that Congress realign its course according to the long term strategy for investment in science and technology to sustain US economic competitiveness and prosperity.

IEEE-USA is an organizational unit of the IEEE. It was created in 1973 to advance the public good and promote the careers and public-policy interests of the more than 225,000 technology professionals who are U.S. members of the IEEE. The IEEE is the world's largest technical professional society. For more information, go to <http://www.ieeeusa.org> or contact Bill Williams at 202-530-8331.

Sincerely,

Dr. Russell Lefevre
President, IEEE-USA

[Same letter sent to OSTP Director John Marburger, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Byron Dorgan]