



March 26, 2008

Dr. Wayne Van Citters
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard, Room 1045S
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Wayne,

The Solar Observatory Council met in Hawaii during the week of March 10, 2008. We are grateful to have had the direct participation of Tom Barnes during our meeting.

One critical issue which dominated our discussion was the current situation with the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST). We want to acknowledge the step taken by the NSF on identifying funding in FY09 for continued design activities within the MREFC account. We believe this is a valuable step towards a decision to begin construction.

Notwithstanding this step forward we want to point out two important programmatic issues that must still be resolved. First, the outcome of the Omnibus Appropriations bill in FY08 has left NSO with an inadequate budget to sustain ATST until FY09. We believe that funding in the range of \$1M will be required to accomplish a transition to FY09.

Secondly, and related to this, it is crucial to sustain a base program within NSO that can achieve the necessary operations capability this fiscal year and in future years when ATST is built. The "bridge funding" identified above would serve this purpose to avert this year's crisis. Future planning must include an increasing buildup in ATST related effort within NSO to accompany the construction program.

We hope that you will consider these important needs and work with NSO to structure a viable program. We deeply appreciate your past support.

Respectfully,

Dr. Thomas Ayres
University of Colorado

Dr. J. Todd Hoeksema
Stanford University

Dr. William Smith
AURA

Dr. Yvonne Elsworth
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Dr. Jeffrey Kuhn
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