

Phony NSF Paper Effects Legislation

On April 8, 1992, the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology held hearings to investigate the NSF and their shortfall paper. The following are headlines and comments excerpted from just a few publications that reported on the hearings. In depth coverage of the issue is provided by Robert Bellinger's article from the April 13 issue of **Electronic Engineering Times**. You may recall reading about some of these issues, for the past five years, in the North Jersey Section IEEE **NEWSLETTER**.

You should know that the two prime individuals involved in the NSF incident are part of the government bureaucracy and on the government payroll. Erich Bloch, a Life Fellow of IEEE, is recently retired as NSF's director.

Please keep your Senators and Congressional Representatives apprised of this issue. Ask them to reduce funding for the NSF and review and rescind all legislation influenced by the National Science Foundation's false projection.

"NSF falls short on shortage" by Jeffrey Mervis, April 16, 1992, **NATURE**, VOL 356. "Washington --A widely publicized study by the National Science Foundation (NSF) forecasting a shortage of 675,000 scientists in the next two decades is so flawed at to be nearly worthless, a subcommittee of the U.S. Congress has concluded...The number helped NSF to gain a larger budget, Wolpe claims, and became part of legislation."

"NSF Gets Raked Over The Coals On Engineer 'Shortfall' Study"

By Declan Conroy, Monday, April 13, 1992, **NEW TECHNOLOGY WEEK**

"Unfortunately, NSF's former director Erich Bloch used the figures repeatedly in speeches for levering more federal money for education--and for the foundation. The studies themselves were titled "Future Scarcities of Scientists and Engineers: Problems and Solutions."

"Scientist Shortfall a Myth - NSF Study Seriously Flawed, Panel is Told" by Boyce Rensberger, April 9, 1992, **WASHINGTON POST**

"The familiar claim that the United States faces a major shortage of scientists and engineers--often cited by National Science Foundation officials when seeking budget increases--is false and was based on a seriously flawed NSF study, seven scientists, engineers and government officials told a congressional subcommittee yesterday".

"NSF study under fire on the Hill" "Congressman hits NSF shortfall study" by Robert Bellinger, April 13, 1992, **Electronic Engineering Times** -- "The NSF paper predicted a shortfall of 400,000 to 692,000 engineers and scientists. It became one of the most widely quoted papers the NSF ever produced--and one of the most controversial. Last week, the man behind the prediction, Peter W. House, the director of the Policy Research and Analysis division of NSF, was grilled for more than two hours on methodology, squabbles within NSF over the report, and why he remained silent for five years while the media, executives and Congress spread the news of an impending shortage."

Congress: Was the "Shortfall" Phony? By Eliot Marshall, April 10, 1992, **SCIENCE**, VOL 256. "During the 1980s, Erich Bloch, director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), raised an alarm about an imminent national crisis. Within a decade or two, he said, the country would begin to discover it was not producing enough scientists and engineers to carry on the business of a great economic power. Sometimes Bloch spoke of a "shortfall," sometimes of an unsatisfied "demand" or a "shortage." But the message was always the same: that the United States needed more scientists and engineers--immediately.

"Now comes a critical investigation by representative Howard Wolpe (D-MI) suggesting that this alarmist message was one-sided and possibly a deliberate exaggeration."

"Congress Meets The NSF" by Steve Scrupski, May 1, 1992, **ELECTRONIC DESIGN** "The mid-1980's study conducted by the National Science Foundation - yes, the one that insidiously predicted a looming engineering shortage - has prompted an investigation by Congress of that organization...Here we have a U.S. government agency, the NSF, that is not 'a friend of the engineering community,' but rather has done harm to all engineers doing their part to improve the country's competitive technology stance."

By: Richard F. Tax

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