

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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Closeout [REDACTED]

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OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 15, 1998

To: File No. I98070013

From: [REDACTED] Special Agent, Investigations Section
[REDACTED] Investigation Student Trainee [REDACTED]

Through: [REDACTED] Special Agent-in-Charge, Investigations Section

Re: Case Closeout - [REDACTED]

Background:

On July 14, 1998, our office received information from an NSF program officer that [REDACTED] had possibly submitted duplicate proposals to the Department of Energy (DOE) and the NSF under the Small Business and Innovation Research (SBIR) Program. The program officer obtained a copy of the DOE proposal, which had been funded. Both the DOE and NSF program officers noted the similarities between both proposals. Another NSF program officer conducted a technical review of the proposals, and also noted many similarities, except for a difference in the polymers being prepared for each project.

Investigation:

We reviewed both proposals, and found that [REDACTED] did not disclose a similar DOE proposal in the one sent to NSF. We did find, however, that a DOE project was mentioned in the text of the NSF proposal, along with the number of the DOE program officer. In addition, a DOE project entitled [REDACTED] was listed in the current & pending support section of the NSF proposal. The DOE proposal we reviewed is entitled [REDACTED]

We interviewed the Principal Investigator (PI) of the NSF proposal, [REDACTED] along with another [REDACTED] employee and counsel. They told us that the proposals were similar, but not overlapping. They stated that they were attempting to solve the same problem, but using a

different chemistry and forming a different fuel cell for each project. They asserted they were not required to disclose the proposals, as required in the NSF solicitation.

On August 20, 1998, an NSF panel reviewed the NSF proposal, and did not rank it high enough to receive funding. This proposal is expected to be declined.

Findings:

Because these proposals are not 100% duplicative, there appears to be partial disclosure of the DOE project to NSF, and the NSF proposal will most likely be declined, no further investigation is warranted at this time. This case is closed.