

STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

PAUL BERG
Willson Professor of Biochemistry

December 30, 1976

Dr. Robert L. Sinsheimer
Chairman, Division of Biology
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, California

Dear Bob,

Thanks for sending me a copy of your SIPI testimony in Washington and for the "statement" regarding your activities at Cal Tech concerning Recombinant DNA Research. You already know my position on the former (see enclosed TIBS editorial in press) but I would like to comment on the latter.

Frankly, I'm astonished at your naiveté. You must be the only person who thinks there is no contradiction between the very strong position you've taken nationally and internationally against most forms of Recombinant DNA Research in University research laboratories and your permissive policy for such research at Cal Tech. It is neither slander nor innuendo to raise questions about the depth of your concern when one hears of the following inconsistencies: At the same time that you are testifying before scientific, lay and governmental groups throughout the country that P3 - type work is too dangerous to be permitted in anything but a few Federally supervised, impregnable laboratories, you have been reported to have taken an active role in seeking and obtaining funds for the construction of P3 facilities in Cal Tech Biology Division (How can you reconcile your recommendation to the San Diego City Council's Recombinant DNA Study Panel not to permit construction of P3 facilities at UCSD with your concurrence that such facilities can be built at Cal Tech?); your untiring efforts to persuade other institutions city councils and the government to reconsider implementation of the guidelines, with what I have heard is conspicuous silence in Pasadena and at Cal Tech; and, of course, there are the reports of

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recombinant DNA experiments in your own laboratory which, though you feel are benign, are the very kind being railed against by your converts and allies.

No, Bob you can't have your cake and eat it! You can't argue - do as I say not as I do! At least not without provoking questions about your sincerity from equally concerned people who have serious doubts about the validity of your judgement. It seems to me that if you believe unswervingly in the inevitability of your analysis, then it is inconceivable for you to abet and condone that work in your own laboratory or at Cal Tech. If you are unwilling to "unilaterally withdraw The Division of Biology (at Cal Tech) from the community of molecular biologists with the inevitable cost to (their) research and teaching programs" how can you be so aggressive in your attempts to force other institutions to do that?

Bob, you know I've been an admirer of yours for a long time. I have respected your concerns in this matter even if I personally feel them to be exaggerated and unwarranted. But now, I think your actions are having serious and deleterious repercussions on science without any compensating benefit. There is no one I've spoken to who is not puzzled by your apparent schizophrenic behavior.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul".

PB:ab
Encl.