

nuclear power."³⁴

Exchanges between NASA and the AEC in 1974 reflected concerns about future space nuclear needs and capabilities for meeting them. In June, the NASA Administrator, James Fletcher, wrote to AEC Commissioner William Anders of his concern about AEC plans to discontinue the SNAP-19 after Viking '75 and replace it with a new selenide technology RTG.³⁵ In his reply that summer, Anders expressed the problems posed by an \$800,000 reduction in the AEC Fiscal 1975 appropriations request for the Space Nuclear Systems Division:

...while we agree on the importance of such activities as maintaining the SNAP-19 and the Multi-Hundred Watt RTG capabilities; advancing toward the higher performance, low cost selenide RTG's; and continuing work on very high performance, lower cost dynamic systems as well as higher power reactor systems, the funding requirements of this program would exceed that expected to be available. This funding situation is one in which we will need your support of both near term and future budget cycles with all elements of Government if we are to enhance the program as we mutually desire.

Anders proposed the creation of a joint AEC/NASA coordinating board to assure compatibility of programs, to exchange information, and to report status and needs as appropriate.³⁶

Six months later the AEC ceased to exist and was replaced by the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). Robert Seamans was the proposed new director. At his confirmation hearings in December 1974, he said:

Our purpose in ERDA is to provide more options than we have today, to increase our sources and to improve the efficiency in the consumption of energy.

I believe the President and the Congress have wisely recognized the importance for a strong R.&D. agency capable of developing and sustaining a balanced and practical program for energy generation and conservation that will anticipate the needs of our Nation. We must make the best use of all viable sources of energy, and we must at all times minimize the possible environmental risks that these sources