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## F O R E W O R D

*In 1946 the Congress passed the Atomic Energy Act and with it created the Atomic Energy Commission. For the ensuing half-century, the AEC and its successors have pursued biological and environmental research (BER) with an unwavering mandate to exploit the use of fissionable and radioactive material for medical purposes and, at the same time, to ensure the health of the public and the environment during energy technology development and use. The following pages are testimony to the success of this undeviating vision. But more than a clear and consistent charge underlies this success, and it is important, I think, not to lose sight of these other ingredients of achievement—especially as we seek to extend our record of accomplishment into the next millennium.*

■ *In pursuing its charge, the BER program has consistently emphasized basic research. It has addressed long-term generic issues, rather than the near-term questions that are the focus of the regulatory community and industry. This consistency of focus has been essential to the program's half-century of success.*

■ *Equally important has been the scientific diversity of the energy agencies' biomedical and environment program. Cooperation among physicists and physicians, ecologists and engineers has been one of the program's hallmarks. In the future, cross-fertilization will become even more important, as science advances at the interfaces between such disciplines as biology and information science.*

■ *From the early days of the AEC, cooperation has also linked researchers from the national laboratories, the academic community, and the private sector. Coordinating these diverse performers has been crucial to the unique teaming that has made many of the BER successes possible. And this teaming will continue to be a paramount objective of BER management, as we pursue both our stewardship of the national laboratories and our commitment to academic research and education.*

■ *The success of the BER program has often been shared with other federal agencies. The future will demand even stronger and more substantive intraagency, interagency, and international collaborations. The BER program is thus committed to the continuation and enhancement of the interagency collaborations that have been integral to the success of such programs as the Human Genome Project and the U.S. Global Change Research Program. The BER program is also committed to strengthening collaborations with other offices within the Office of Energy Research, such as Basic Energy Sciences and Computational and Technology Research.*

*The year 1997 marks the fiftieth anniversary of biological and environmental research within the DOE and its predecessor agencies.*