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Dr. William F. Raub  
Acting Director  
National Institutes of Health  
R00m 126, Building 1  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20892

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NIH

Dear Dr. Raub:

As a professional biological scientist and senior professor in a university biological sciences faculty, I wish to express my views on the Human Genome Project (HGP).

I join the chorus of other scientists who believe that the HGP is a flagrant waste of Federal research funds. In my view, the HGP is mediocre "science" that represents appalling science policy.

The HGP did not arise from a broad consensus that the sequence information is badly needed. In fact, it is my sense that a very large majority of biomedical and biological scientists in this country believe the HGP to be a bad idea. There is no reason to subscribe to the specious argument that information obtained through the HGP will have a major impact on human diseases. Indeed, even the most stunning successes of the genetic-mapping approach -- discovery of the genes responsible for cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy -- did *not* require the kind of detailed sequence information toward which the HGP is directed.

The HGP is projected to cost at least \$3,000,000,000 over 15 years. Of that amount, no less than \$600,000,000 is expected to be required for computer databases to computer-warehouse sequences most of which will be those of so-called "junk" DNA! Our society cannot afford that kind of price tag on such an ill-considered initiative. At this very moment, our academic-science enterprise is in a very precarious state. Having been second to none elsewhere in the world, basic research in the USA is threatened by diminishing ability and interest on the part of students, decaying research infrastructure, and especially sharply reduced availability of research funds. At a time when many outstanding investigator-initiated, peer-reviewed research projects are going unfunded because of the worst paylines in the history of NIH and NSF, how can we justify wasting *billions* of dollars on work that has not been adequately rationalized and is not even respectable science?

One of the most important issues before you in your important leadership role in American science is the mistake that we call the HGP. It is not too late to take a strong stand and acknowledge that this bad idea need not inevitably be implemented.

Yours respectfully,



John G. Hildebrand, Ph.D.

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