December 2, 1988

Professor Neil Ashcroft
LASSP, Clark Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-2501

Dear Professor Ashcroft:

This will acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your comments on Professor Pons' rebuttal on the proposal entitled, "The Behavior of Electrochemically Compressed Hydrogen and Deuterium."

Your kind assistance in our evaluation process is genuinely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ryszard Gajewski, Director
Division of Advanced Energy Projects
Office of Basic Energy Sciences, ER-16

Cornell University

Laboratory of Atomic
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Clark Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853-2501

Telex WUI6713054

November 23, 1988

Dr. Ryszard Gajewski
Division of Advanced Energy Projects
Office of Basic Energy Sciences, ER-16
Washington, DC 20545

Re: Pons/Fleischmann Proposal

Dear Dr. Gajewski,

Thank you for your letter and the (somewhat revised) proposal by Pons and Fleischmann.

I have not changed my opinion and I will take up the rebuttals one by one.

#1. The authors have forgotten their elementary chemistry. In particular they need to be reminded of the cusp theorem. The idea that deuterium loses its electron to the d-band of palladium is very naive. It's a rigorous theorem that the gradient of the electronic charge density at the deuteron nucleus is proportional to the electron density itself (at the same position). Since this density is not very different in Pd-D from pure solid deuterium, then by a Heitler-London argument, the interactions controlling the collisions between deuterons in Pd-D will likewise not be very different from the solid deuteruim case. Differences can certainly be expected at long range, but this is irrelevant from the standpoint of the present proposal. If the authors do not believe this, they might instead consider doing a little homework: screened point ion potentials appropriate to metallic environments are readily available in the literature (even for hydrogen). If they think the electrons weaken the potential in the region that matters, they should think again.

#2. The muon through its mass presents a favorable length scale for deuteron-deuteruim collisions. The authors in their last proposal were implying that electron-screening would achieve the same purpose. They still hold to this view, as they say in the abstract, and the argument is specious for the reasons given above.

#3. The previous proposal had very little discussion on important experimental details. In spite of the figures given, I remain dubious. Was any attempt made to verify that the sample remained in the same bulk phase? Is electromigration a problem? Is the temperature dependence of C sufficiently small that equation (5) follows accurately from (3)?

General Remark:

It is very important to support speculative research, provided there's some physical basis to the speculation. In my mind, the authors have presented no such

argument. I would be willing to consider this proposal further if the authors will produce a microscopic estimate that would demonstrate in this alloy (and under conditions that are quite typical of condensed matter physics) a high likelihood of the close deuteron encounters that are necessary to fusion. I emphasize the word alloy.

Again, I do not think the proposal should be supported.

Yours sincerely,

N W Ashcroft

Neil W. Ashcroft

P.S. You might seek the advice of a metal hydride physicist, for example, Prof. R. Barnes, Ames Laboratory, Iowa State University, Des Moines.