

January 21, 2003

Dr. Philip Goode  
Big Bear Solar Observatory  
40386 N. Shore Lane  
Big Bear City, CA 92314

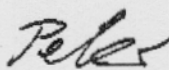
Dear Phil:

I am writing to express my support for the 1.6 m New Solar Telescope NST at Big Bear, and the eagerness of the Steward Observatory Mirror Lab (SOML) to work with you to make a first-rate primary mirror for your innovative off-axis NST design.

The NST, in addition to being an important project for the solar community, breaks important new ground in optical design and optical technology. The unobstructed design with off-axis mirrors offers superior image quality for solar studies and is the baseline design for the 4m ATST. Off-axis mirrors are also essential components of the coming generation of giant visible/IR telescopes for nighttime astronomy. It is widely recognized that these mirrors present technical challenges in their manufacture, testing, and alignment in telescope systems. The NST primary mirror is an important milestone in the development and use of large, high-quality off-axis mirrors.

We are very interested in working with you on the primary mirror. Making this mirror would be an important validation of our approach to making larger off-axis mirrors for future giant telescopes and potentially for the ATST.

Sincerely,



Peter A. Strittmatter  
Director