April 12, 1983

Naval Research Laboratory
4555 Overlook Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20375

Attn: Dr. Michael Read
Code 4740

Subject: Final Report for Contract N00014-81-C-2293

Reference: MRC #8202

Dear Dr. Read:

In accordance with the DD 1423 for the subject contract and in further compliance with Section F of that contract, this letter constitutes the final report for Contract N00014-81-C-2293. All tasks listed in the contract have been successfully completed, and the key results are summarized below. More in-depth information may be found in NRL Memorandum Report 4865.

The breakdown plasma was observed to travel towards the source with a velocity of $4.6 \times 10^6$ cm/s. This was a result of the formation of a sufficiently dense plasma to reflect the incident microwaves. This decoupling mechanism makes localized heating of air by microwaves extremely difficult, if not impossible. Rapid heating of the air is further minimized by the large amount of energy trapped by nitrogen vibrational states. These states "lock-up" energy for long periods of time, preventing its transfer to kinetic energy. Observation of the
electron temperature \((T_e = 3.8 \text{ eV})\) confirmed this. These two factors prevent the formation of large shock waves due to rapid heating of the air.

Due to limited microwave power, these investigations were performed at pressures of 100 Torr. These experiments demonstrated the main physics; however, it is believed to be worthwhile to conduct experiments at atmospheric pressure when higher power sources become available. The purpose of these experiments would be to confirm at atmospheric pressure the decoupling mechanism and the low electron temperatures observed at 100 Torr.

Sincerely,

W. Michael Bollen
Principal Investigator

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cc: Kimberly Goldstein, MRC/SB