



Assessment of Inertial Confinement Fusion Targets

Panel on the Assessment of Inertial Confinement Fusion Targets, Board on Physics and Astronomy, Board on Energy and Environmental Systems, Division on Engineering and Physical Sciences, National Research Council

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In the fall of 2010, the Office of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Secretary for Science asked for a National Research Council (NRC) committee to investigate the prospects for generating power using inertial confinement fusion (ICF) concepts, acknowledging that a key test of viability for this concept—ignition—could be demonstrated at the National Ignition Facility (NIF) at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) in the relatively near term. The committee was asked to provide an unclassified report. However, DOE indicated that to fully assess this topic, the committee's deliberations would have to be informed by the results of some classified experiments and information, particularly in the area of ICF targets and nonproliferation. Thus, the Panel on the Assessment of Inertial Confinement Fusion Targets ("the panel") was assembled, composed of experts able to access the needed information. The panel was charged with advising the Committee on the Prospects for Inertial Confinement Fusion Energy Systems on these issues, both by internal discussion and by this unclassified report.

A Panel on Fusion Target Physics ("the panel") will serve as a technical resource to the Committee on Inertial Confinement Energy Systems ("the Committee") and will prepare a report that describes the R&D challenges to providing suitable targets, on the basis of parameters established and provided to the Panel by the Committee. The Panel on Fusion Target Physics will prepare a report that will assess the current performance of fusion targets associated with various ICF concepts in order to understand:

1. The spectrum output;
2. The illumination geometry;
3. The high-gain geometry; and
4. The robustness of the target design.

The panel addressed the potential impacts of the use and development of current concepts for Inertial Fusion Energy on the proliferation of nuclear weapons information and technology, as appropriate. The Panel examined technology options, but does not provide recommendations specific to any currently operating or proposed ICF facility.

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