The day the funding died
By Carole LaBonne

Sing to the tune of “American Pie”

A long, long time ago
I can still remember how those pink sheets used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make reviewers dance
And maybe we'd be funded... for a while

But the sequester made me shiver
With each proposal I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep
I couldn't take one more step

I can't remember if I cried
When I read it'd scored a "25"
But something touched me deep inside
The day.. the funding.. died

So bye-bye, good 'ol basic science try
Sent my best work to the NIH, but the budget was dry
And them engineers and chemists were looking happy and sly
Singin' "This'll be the day that you die!"
"yep, this might be the day that I die...."

Did you write the book of "know"?
And, do the data tell you so?
Or did the funding drag you low?
Now does your science rock and roll?
Can re-sults feed your hungry soul?
And can you tell me..why the funding's.. so slow?

Well, I know my funding chance is slim
'Cause I know that paylines are a whim
Most grants are gonna lose
And council has to choose..
Even the heavy hitters, the broncin' bucks
Got their grants mired deep in the muck
So I knew I was out of luck
The day the funding died

[Chorus]
I started singin' bye-bye, good 'ol basic science try
Sent my best work to the NIH, but the budget was dry
And them engineers and chemists were looking happy and sly
Singin' "This'll be the day that you die!"
"yep, this might be the day that I die...."

[Verse 2]
Now for four years we've been on our own
Can't squeeze no LB from a stone
But that's not how it used to be
When the Director sang for the king and queen
'Bout a stimulus funding revenue stream
And the funding, it came to you and me

But while NIH was looking down
Congress stole its thorny crown
The study sections were adjourned
The RPGs were all returned

And while Ted Cruz burned a book on Marx
funding science became "just a lark"
So we all sang dirges in the dark
'Bout the day.. the funding.. died

_________________
Carole LaBonne, PhD
Professor, Dept. of Molecular Biosciences
Program Leader, Tumor Invasion and Metastasis Section, Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center
Director, Interdisciplinary Biological Sciences (IBiS) PhD Program
Northwestern University