

October 29, 2001

Professor Dr. Adolf Birkhofer
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Dear Professor Dr. Birkhofer:

On behalf of the Commissioners and the staff of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, I am writing on the occasion of your retirement from the GRS to recognize your many contributions to the field of nuclear reactor safety over the course of your distinguished career. You have been a leader of the international nuclear technology community for more than 30 years, and we at the NRC have been privileged to work with you on many occasions.

Your achievements over the course of your career are impressive. Your technical acumen and experience is held in high regard both in Germany, where you have served as GRS's Technical Director and as a member and Chairman of the Reactor Safety Commission (RSK), and internationally, as indicated by your membership on advisory groups and committees associated with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) of the OECD, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), and organizations in France, Belgium, and Armenia. I believe that your pioneering accomplishments as Director of the first German risk study and your continuing contributions in the field of risk assessment are worthy of particular note. Your leadership in the development of the report on OECD's nuclear energy activities, appropriately known as the "Birkhofer Report," has helped set the stage for more effective operation of that vital organization. Your accomplishments have been appropriately recognized and honored by your colleagues in the American and European Nuclear Societies, the University of Karlsruhe, the Kurchatov Institute, and by the governments of Germany and France.

The NRC has been fortunate to have your advice and guidance on many occasions over the years. Your participation as a peer reviewer of the Reactor Safety Study (WASH-1400) was of considerable value to that project, and led to further interactions with the NRC staff over the course of the German risk study. You again gave unstintingly of your time and provided invaluable insights as a peer reviewer on the severe accident study now known as NUREG-1150. And you have continued to take part in technical discussions and exchanges with the Commission, the NRC staff, and the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS), to our mutual benefit. We were pleased to be able to recognize and honor your contributions as a pioneer in the field of risk assessment at last year's Water Reactor Safety Meeting. You are viewed by many at the NRC as an esteemed friend and colleague, and your efforts to increase international cooperation and improve reactor safety worldwide are greatly appreciated.

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From a personal perspective, I have enjoyed our discussions on issues of mutual interest on the various occasions when we have met. Though your work with the GRS is coming to an end, I hope and trust that we will still have the benefit of your wisdom and good counsel in the future. My very best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Sincerely

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve