

December 4, 2001

Laurence Williams, Chief Inspector
HM Superintending Inspector of Nuclear Installations
St. Peter's House
Stanley Precinct
Balliol Road, Bootle
Merseyside L20 3LZ
United Kingdom

Dear Laurence:

Many thanks for taking the time to meet with me during my November 12-14th, 2001, visit to the United Kingdom, and for facilitating our delegation's visit to both the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) and British Nuclear Fuels Limited. The meetings and discussions were very informative. Thanks also goes to Helen Leiser for the discussions we held at her office on November 14th. I would also like to single out for recognition, Bill Ascroft-Hutton, for his commitment and effort in making our visit not only technically informative but enjoyable.

Your thoughts and insights on the regulatory challenges that arise as we move forward with the new Pebble Bed Modular Reactor gas-cooled technology will be of great value to us. We would like to continue to explore cooperation and participation in areas related to this technology, as well as other areas of mutual interest to both regulatory bodies. During our discussions with your staff, we were informed that NII has established a center of excellence for graphite technology at Manchester University. We would like to learn more about the graphite research capabilities and ongoing projects at the university to assess its potential applicability to NRC's graphite technology infrastructure development needs in support of licensing reviews. NII's plans to establish an international collaborative group to coordinate and share research results on graphite technology is also of interest to us, and we would like to participate in these activities. We also discussed cooperation for developing codes and standards related to the design, manufacture, and properties of graphite materials and plan to expand this further with NII. Bill is aware of our interest in future cooperation between NRC and NII in these areas, including follow-on meetings in both Washington, DC and the UK. We would like to continue our interactions with him on your behalf.

Once again, thank you for a delightful visit, and please extend my sincere appreciation to your colleagues for their support and participation.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Ashok C. Thadani, Director
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

cc: W. Ascroft-Hutton, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

D/IB

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cc: W. Ascroft-Hutton, Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

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