

May 4, 2001

Mr. Jukka Laaksonen
Director General
Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK)
P.O. Box 14, FIN-00881 Helsinki
FINLAND

Dear Mr. Laaksonen:

Over the years, we have had a close working relationship with Keijo Valtonen of your staff. We frequently ask his advice on technical matters, and during 1999-2000, Mr. Valtonen served on a PIRT panel (PIRT=Phenomenon Identification and Ranking Table) at NRC with about 25 of the world's experts on reactor fuel behavior. All of this has taken place rather informally under the general agreement for cooperation between STUK and NRC.

During the past few years, in addition to the activities mentioned above, Mr. Valtonen has been consulting with our fuel-rod code developers at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory as they have been improving our FRAPCON (steady state) and FRAPTRAN (transient) fuel rod codes. We have provided him with the latest versions of these codes prior to their release so that he could run the codes in Finland. Recently, Mr. Valtonen has given us two reports that were prepared under his direction by VTT on related code activities. One is on implementing the codes in Finland, and the other is on coupling a thermal-hydraulic code (GENFLO) with NRC's transient code, FRAPTRAN. The GENFLO-FRAPTRAN coupling in particular appears to be a valuable piece of work that we can use at NRC, and we have asked our code developers to utilize this development to the extent possible.

In addition to all of the above, Mr. Valtonen has been instrumental in setting up an assignment for Timo Karjunen to spend several months at Argonne National Laboratory this summer working on an important NRC program. It therefore seems appropriate to acknowledge the close cooperation that we are experiencing with STUK in the area of reactor fuel behavior, and to express our appreciation for the very valuable assistance that we have been receiving from Mr. Valtonen.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Ashok Thadani, Director
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

cc: Keijo Valtonen, STUK

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