

50-602



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Department of Mechanical Engineering • ETC II 5.160 • Austin, Texas 78712-1063
Telephone (512) 471-1131 FAX (512) 471-8727

May 22, 1998

Mr. Alexander Adams
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Agency
416 Westridge Drive
Washington DC 2055-0001

Dear Mr. Adams:

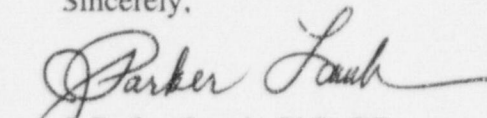
I write to report further on actions being taken to improve the safe and effective operation of the University of Texas Nuclear Engineering Teaching Laboratory. In my letter of May 13 I indicated that our Nuclear Reactor Committee would be strengthened through the addition of an outside member. I am pleased to indicate that Dr. Jack Higginbotham of Oregon State University has agreed to serve in this role.

The primary purpose of this letter is to notify you that we intend to reconstitute this committee immediately, rather than wait until the next academic year. We have taken this action because of the need to move decisively and quickly on implementing the remedial measures I outlined in the letter of May 13. You will be notified officially if any of these enhancements change our technical specifications.

At present the Reactor Committee is composed of seven engineering faculty (at large) and one graduate NE student. In addition there are three ex-officio members which include the Associate Dean for Research, the Chair of Mechanical Engineering and the Reactor Supervisor. In recent years the Reactor Supervisor (Assistant Director) has developed the agenda and provided the primary input to these meetings. As a participant it has been clear to me, as well as to others on the committee including the current Chair Dr. Landsberger, that these meetings, while meeting all regulatory requirements of the NRC in terms of safety audits and of reporting, have been completely ineffective in addressing the serious problems facing the laboratory, especially in regards to short and long range planning to address issues identified in past NRC inspections.

Under the new organization, Dr. Dale Klein will assume the position of Nuclear Reactor Committee Chair and will be empowered to form an executive committee which will provide the necessary management authority to assist the NETL Director in bringing about the necessary changes outlined in the letter of May 13. Even though the size of the committee will be temporarily increased it will return to its traditional strength in September when all faculty committees are appointed. The Dean of Engineering has been briefed on this committee change and is in full agreement with its intent and its rationale. As usual we will answer any questions which you may have.

Sincerely,


J. Parker Lamb, PhD, PE
Chair of Mechanical Engineering

1/6
A020

xc: Ben G. Streetman, Dean of Engineering

9806040277 980522
PDR ADOCK 05000602
P PDR