



June 26, 2000

Dr. Paul Thomas  
JET Joint Undertaking  
Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3EA  
ENGLAND

Dear Paul:

I am writing to invite you to serve as a member of the Next Step Options Program Advisory Committee. The Next Step Options (NSO) activity was established to investigate and assess opportunities for advancing the scientific understanding of fusion energy, with emphasis on burning plasma behavior at high energy gain and for long duration. The NSO activity is being carried out under the auspices of the Virtual Laboratory for Technology (VLT) and I am forming this NSO Program Advisory Committee to advise me, as VLT Director and the VLT Program Advisory Committee (Chair: Prof. Stewart Prager, University of Wisconsin). A copy of the NSO PAC Charter which outlines the purpose and responsibilities is attached. Dr. Tony Taylor of General Atomics will serve as the Chair of the NSO PAC, and Prof. Gerald Navratil, of Columbia University, will serve as Vice-Chair.

The primary role of the NSO PAC will be to provide advice on the mission, physics basis, and design of the options and strategies for experimental studies of high energy gain, long duration plasma which are being studied as part of the NSO activity. The initial focus of the NSO activity has been on a design concept called the Fusion Ignition Research Experiment (FIRE) and an examination of that work will be the first task of the NSO PAC.

The first meeting of the NSO PAC has been set for Thursday, July 20, and Friday, July 21 at General Atomics in San Diego following the DOE Fusion Energy Sciences Advisory Committee Meeting in San Diego on July 18-19. The meeting will begin at 8:30 AM on July 20 and end at 12:30 PM on July 21. A draft agenda of the meeting is attached.

I hope you will be able to accept this invitation to serve on the NSO PAC. I expect the PAC to meet on an annual basis. We can discuss whether other meetings might be desirable. This is a very important activity for the US Fusion Energy Sciences Program to help establish the scientific and design basis for major next steps in developing practical fusion energy. Your advice will be very valuable in carrying out these activities in the most effective possible way.

Sincerely yours,

Charles C. Baker, Director  
Virtual Laboratory for Technology

CCB/cch  
Attachments  
Cc: S. Prager, VLT PAC  
M. Roberts, DOE

Virtual Laboratory for Technology - University of California, San Diego  
9500 Gilman Drive, MC 0420, La Jolla, CA 92093-0420, USA  
TEL: (858) 534-4971; FAX: (858) 534-5440; EMAIL: cbaker@vlt.ucsd.edu