



NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE

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November 6, 2012

Mr. Carl Mazzola
Chair, Nuclear Facilities Standards Committee
American Nuclear Society
555 North Kensington Avenue
La Grange Park, IL 60526

Subject: Industry Position on a Potential New ANS Standard, "Integrated Safety Assessments for Fuel Facilities" (ANS 57.11 Working Group PINS)

Dear Mr. Mazzola:

On behalf of the fuel cycle industry, the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI)¹ provides the following information for your consideration on the recent American Nuclear Society (ANS) initiative to develop a standard on conducting Integrated Safety Analyses (ISAs) at fuel cycle facilities (i.e., ANS-57.11, "Integrated Safety Assessments for Fuel Fabrication Facilities"). The fuel cycle industry has carefully considered this important matter for some time, most recently expressed its position and its basis to NRC in a letter dated April 17, 2012 (attached), and continues to believe that this initiative should not proceed.

Specifically, we continue to believe that supporting the development of an ISA standard would be a significant and ill-advised diversion of scarce operational safety resources in the absence of a clearly articulated safety issue or concern with the facility-specific ISAs in use today. Other higher priority NRC regulatory initiatives are competing for our operational safety resources. Further, NRC has previously approved the methodologies underlying the ISAs in place today, and NRC's own Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) in 2011 recognized the current ISA methodology and "living" nature of the ISA as adequate to demonstrate compliance with NRC requirements and ensure safety.

¹ NEI is the organization responsible for establishing unified nuclear industry policy on matters affecting the nuclear energy industry, including the regulatory aspects of generic operational and technical issues. NEI's members include all utilities licensed to operate commercial nuclear power plants in the United States, nuclear plant designers, major architect/engineering firms, fuel fabrication facilities, materials licensees, and other organizations and individuals involved in the nuclear energy industry.

We trust that the information contained in this letter will be of value to you and other ANS members as you consider this important matter. To that end, we request that this letter be promptly provided to all members of the Nuclear Facilities Standards Committee and its subcommittee, ANS-2.7, Nuclear Fuel Safety as well as the ANS-57.11 working group. Industry's position on this matter is summarized as follows:

- Limited industry resources should not and cannot be diverted from ensuring the safe and secure day-to-day facility operations in the absence of a well-documented safety issue and technical basis to support any ISA standards development initiative. No such safety issue or basis has been identified.
- Limited industry resources (and we suspect NRC resources) would be more effectively utilized by focusing on higher priority, current NRC regulatory initiatives. These include but are not limited to: 1) promulgation and implementation of a revised 10 CFR Part 40 that applies to conversion/deconversion and fuel fabrication facilities; 2) addressing unresolved items resulting from NRC inspections under the post-Fukushima Temporary Instruction (MC 2600/015); 3) a proposed rule for Part 74 regarding material control and accounting; 4) enhancements to NRC's Fuel Cycle Oversight Process to include Corrective Action Programs; and 5) a draft regulatory basis for potential modifications to Part 21 involving commercial grade dedication among other new and revised requirements.
- Industry has successfully relied on more than 40 existing industry standards developed by such professional organizations as the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the American National Standards Institute, and the International Standards Organization among others (see attached letter). NRC has approved use of these standards as the basis for existing facility-specific ISAs which are "living documents" that evolve to reflect current facility operations with updates provided to NRC on an annual basis. This approach to ISA development and maintenance was recognized by NRC's ACRS in 2011 as adequate to demonstrate compliance and assure safety. Further, NRC has access to any ISA related information maintained at NRC-licensed fuel facilities that may be of interest to them.
- Finally, industry representatives actively support NEI's Fuel Operations Committee, professional organizations as committee members and attend technical conferences and meetings where operational issues, best practices and lessons-learned are routinely discussed. These opportunities provide risk insights and shared experiences that are applied at a facility as warranted. This practical experience combined with copious industry guidance and that provided in NRC's Chapter 3 of NUREG-1520 on risk ranking the analytical results of an ISA provide a sound foundation to ensuring a complete and high quality ISA.

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Reflecting on this information coupled with industry's confidence in the existing ISAs, we do not support development of an ISA standard by any organization!

Please contact me at (202) 739-8098; jrs@nei.org if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



Janet R. Schlueter

Attachment

- c: Ms. Patricia Schroeder, American Nuclear Society
- Mr. Robert G. Eble, AREVA-MOX Services
- Mr. Michael F. Weber, EDO, NRC
- Mr. John D. Kinneman, NMSS/FCSS, NRC