Bases for Withdrawal of Regulatory Guide (RG) 3.29

"Preheat and Interpass Temperature Control for the Welding of Low-Alloy Steel for Use in Fuel Reprocessing Plants and in Plutonium Processing and Fuel Fabrication Plants"

(1) What regulations did the Regulatory Guide support?

RG 3.29 provides guidance on meeting the requirements of Appendix B, "Quality Assurance Criteria for Nuclear Power Plants and Fuel Reprocessing Plants," to 10 CFR Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," and 10 CFR Part 70, "Domestic Licensing of Special Nuclear Material."

(2) What was the purpose of the Regulatory Guide?

RG 3.29 identified a method acceptable to the staff for controlling the welding of low-alloy steel components for fuel reprocessing plants and for plutonium processing and fuel fabrication facilities. The guide endorsed portions of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code (Sections III, VIII, and IX) and provided additional guidance.

(3) How was the Regulatory Guide used?

RG 3.29 was used to encourage the standardization of the qualifications for welding of low-alloy steel components. RG 3.29 was published in May 1975 for the licensing and operation of fuel reprocessing plants, plutonium processing and fuel fabrication plants, which ceased in the 1970's. This regulatory guide is cited in NUREG -1718, "Standard Review Plan for the Review of an Application for a Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility." However, it is just for reference purposes. Once NUREG -1718 is updated, references to RG 3.29 will be changed to RG 1.50.

(4) Why is the Regulatory Guide no longer needed?

RG 3.29 is no longer needed because its guidance and regulatory positions are contained in RG 1.50, Rev. 1, "Control of Preheat Temperature for Welding of Low-Alloy Steel," which was updated in March 2011.

(5) What guidance is available once the Regulatory Guide is withdrawn?

The NRC staff's regulatory position for the requirements for welding of low-alloy steel components for fuel reprocessing plants and fuel fabrication plants are provided in Regulatory Guide 1.50, Rev. 1.

(6) Is the Regulatory Guide referenced in other documents and what are the "ripple effects" on these documents if it is withdrawn?

There will be no "ripple effect" due to the withdrawal of RG 3.29 since its guidance is duplicated in RG 1.50, Rev. 1. RG 3.29 is referenced in a Standard Review Plan. Once NUREG-1718 is updated, references to RG 3.29 will be replaced with RG 1.50, Rev. 1.

(7) What is the basis for believing that the Regulatory Guide will never be needed?

The guidance remains valid and has been incorporated into RG 1.50, Rev. 1.

(8) Will generic guidance still be needed?

Guidance for complying with the applicable regulations for welding of low alloy steel components is still needed and is provided in RG 1.50, Rev. 1.

(9) What is the rationale for withdrawing this regulatory guide instead of revising it?

RG 3.29 contains guidance that is outdated. Updated guidance is included in Revision 1 of RG 1.50.

(10) Do other agencies rely upon Regulatory Guide 3.29, e.g., the Agreement States, National Aeronautical and Space Administration, Department of Energy?

The NRC staff is not aware of any agencies that rely on this regulatory guide. It is possible that other agencies may have used RG 3.29 to identify requirements that may be related to their activities. The regulatory guide states that procedures for welding should be in accordance with the requirements of Section XI of the ASME Code, so any impacts would likely be small.