



Department of Energy
Germantown, MD 20874-1290

October 30, 1998

Mr. Patrick W. Cooke
Project Coordinator
Office of Standards Services
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Building 820, Room 164
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899

Dear Mr. Cooke:

As Standards Executive for the Department of Energy, I am providing our input for the Fiscal Year 1998 Annual Report to the Office of Management and Budget on the Status of Agency Interaction with Voluntary Standards Bodies. Included with our input is supplementary information regarding Department of Energy activities related to the principles and objectives of Public Law 104-113 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-119.

We are providing narrative text on a 3.5-inch diskette in Word 6.0 format. This narrative text will also be provided separately through e-mail. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Serbu, the Department's Technical Standards Program Manager, at (301) 903-2856, or Jeffrey Feit at (301) 903-3927.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard L. Black".

Richard L. Black, Director
Office of Nuclear Safety
Policy and Standards

Enclosure

cc: P. Brush, EH-I
O. Pearson, EH-3
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FISCAL YEAR 1998 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE)

The DOE implements the Federal guidance and requirements in OMB Circular A-119 and the statutory requirements in Public Law (PL) 104-113 (15 USC 272) on the use of voluntary standards through specific Departmental directives (policy, requirements, guides, and technical standards) and supporting management systems.

DOE P 251.1, "Directives System," establishes a Directives System for managing DOE requirements and guidance documents and incorporates technical standards (i.e., those standards that are specifically addressed in PL 104-113) as the foundation of the Department's directives system hierarchy. This policy clearly states DOE's preference to "adopt National Consensus Standards and other commercial and industry standards..." in the conduct of Departmental activities. The policy also contains provisions restricting the use of mandated technical standards in DOE rulemaking and Orders stipulating DOE-specific requirements. DOE requirements in Orders and rules reference appropriate voluntary consensus standards when they are acceptable to meet the requirements.

DOE P 410.1A, "Promulgating Nuclear Safety Requirements," also requires notice and comment rulemaking to promulgate new nuclear safety requirements. The new nuclear safety requirements promulgated by the Department are "performance-based" rules which permit the adoption of commercial and industry standards as acceptable methods to implement the rules when appropriate for the work to be conducted and the hazards to be encountered.

These Departmental policies on the use of voluntary standards are subsequently implemented through a management system established through DOE Order 1300.2A, "Department of Energy Technical Standards Program." This Order requires DOE elements to use international and national voluntary standards in preference to Federal and DOE standards, consistent with PL 104-113 and OMB A-119. It also establishes an integrated Department-wide Technical Standards Program and supporting infrastructure designed to implement Federal and DOE technical standards requirements and manage related activities within DOE. As advocated in OMB Circular A-119 and PL 104-113, the Order encourages and supports staff participation in the planning, development, and coordination activities of voluntary standards committees.

As of October 1998, DOE Order 1300.2A is being updated to incorporate references to PL 104-113 and the February 1998 revision to OMB Circular A-119. In the interim, the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health issued an information memorandum to the Department's cognizant secretarial officers (i.e., senior DOE line managers in Washington, D.C.) describing the new Public Law, its impact upon DOE, and the planned implementation of the law through the Technical Standards Program. The Department had already incorporated the technical standards provisions of PL 104-113 and OMB Circular A-119 into its current Technical Standards Program Procedures, and currently manages its technical standards activities in conformance with their requirements. Furthermore, DOE hosted a Federal Technical Standards Workshop with broad participation from Federal agencies in August of 1998 to discuss standards management issues and share experience related to implementing PL 104-113 and OMB Circular A-119.

Another element serving to manage implementation of PL 104-113 and OMB Circular A-119 is DOE's Department Standards Program. This Program was established to institute "standards" (in this

application, “standards” include policy, laws, rules, guides, and technical standards) as the basis for work throughout the Department. A Department Standards Committee (DSC) was established in 1994 and served to establish DOE standards policy and remove barriers to implementing a Department-wide standards-based culture. The DSC assists DOE line organizations in the implementation of this Department Standards Program. The “Criteria for the Department’s Standards Program,” DOE/EH/-0416, August 1994, describes elements of the standards-based operating culture envisioned by DOE leadership. Information on the Department Standards Program and the DSC can be accessed at the following Internet address (URL):

<http://www.dsc.doe.gov>

The DSC has sponsored development and implementation of a DOE-wide process that enables DOE contractors to select voluntary consensus standards as the basis for their work in-lieu-of DOE-developed standards if it is appropriate for the work. This “Work Smart” standards approach (also referred to as the “necessary and sufficient” process) enables DOE laboratory and management and operating or integrating contractors, with DOE approval, to identify and apply the set of standards (including technical standards) that best fits their activities. This approach focuses on outcomes and performance, rather than “how” things are to be done within DOE, and is supported by a major contract reform effort designed to more closely link performance expectations with contractual obligations based on standards.

Key Departmental policy and requirements documents defining this approach include DOE P 450.3, “Authorizing Use of the Necessary and Sufficient Process for Standards-Based Environment, Safety and Health Management,” and DOE M 450.3-1, “The Department of Energy Closure Process for Necessary and Sufficient Sets of Standards.” Field pilot projects of the approach have been completed, and significant efficiencies and cost-savings have been demonstrated. Based on the success of the pilot projects, the “Work Smart” standards approach was expanded to cover a broad range of Department programs and facilities. In Fiscal Year (FY) 1998, key Technical Standards Program personnel participated in several DSC working groups that focused on tailoring/integration of “Work-Smart” standards activities and DSC support for the Department’s “Integrated Safety Management” initiative. The Department is reviewing our experience with “Work Smart” to assess the need for revised or additional guidance.

The DOE Standards Executive, Richard L. Black, Director, Office of Nuclear Safety Policy and Standards, continues to be responsible for developing and implementing the DOE Technical Standards Program throughout the Department. He also advises and provides staff support to the Department Standards Committee. Through Mr. Black’s participation on the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy, DOE continues to provide information to other Federal agencies on the Department’s approach to establishing a standards-based culture.

DOE Order 1300.2A emphasizes the use of technical standards within the Department. The Department’s Technical Standards Program Office (TSPO) operates under this directive to implement program policy, support the conversion of Department standards to voluntary standards, identify voluntary standards that can suit Department needs, develop and maintain data bases to support the program and meet reporting requirements, and coordinate day-to-day Department technical standards activities. The TSPO has developed procedures, methods, and training approaches to implement the DOE Technical Standards Program and communicate the policy to use voluntary standards throughout DOE and, when appropriate, participate in voluntary standards committee activities. The program procedures establish a five-year standards review cycle to check for continued applicability; the procedures also provide guidance on the conversion of Department standards to voluntary standards.

Information on the Technical Standards Program and the TSPO can be accessed at the following Internet address (URL):

<http://apollo.osti.gov/html/techstds/techstds.html>

Technical Standards Managers (approximately 70 individuals representing the various Department headquarters, field, laboratory and contractor organizations) have been designated to coordinate the consistent implementation of the program. Established in 1992, the Technical Standards Managers' Committee (comprised of these Technical Standards Managers) operates under the DOE Technical Standards Program, supports the DOE sites in technical standards activities, facilitates communications on program implementation issues, and participates in establishing program goals and procedures. Publications documenting the voluntary standards adopted by DOE and the personnel participating in the activities of voluntary standards groups are developed by the TSPO; the information in those publications is electronically posted for Internet access.

In FY 1998, the Technical Standards Program continued the recognition of "topical" standards committees within the Department. These committees are composed of subject matter experts in the DOE community and can be used as a focal point for standards activities in specific technical areas. The topical committees provide a forum for all interested DOE parties to join and participate in reviewing technical standards produced by counterpart voluntary standards organizations, address standards application issues within their area of technical expertise, and work to develop Department and Federal positions on standards issues. As of October 1998, 19 DOE topical committees have been recognized by the Technical Standards Program. (These committees are identified on the program Internet address listed above).

The Department has also established a DOE Information Technology Standards Program (Internet address is <http://cio.doe.gov>) that is conducted in accordance with the DOE Technical Standards Program. The DOE Information Technology Standards Program is managed by staff from DOE's Office of the Chief Information Officer with assistance from over 70 designated DOE and contractor Information Technology Points-of-Contact representing key programs and sites. It coordinates information technology standards activities Department wide, including the identification, adoption, implementation, and retirement of non-government and government information technology standards in support of the DOE Information Architecture. This program has stressed the use of international and voluntary consensus information technology standards over development of internal standards in its adoption processes.

The Department also implements a legislatively mandated, multi-year effort to improve the energy efficiency in the Nation's buildings through energy efficiency standards, codes and guidelines for buildings, building equipment, and appliances through its Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (Internet address is <http://www.eren.doe.gov>). The Department's codes and standards development efforts in these areas are closely coordinated with standards development organizations and include early involvement of industry and state stakeholders and relevant Federal agencies.

DOE continues to take a "pro-active" approach to standards and standards management even as its mission continues to evolve in response to the conclusion of the Cold War and shrinking Congressional appropriations. A number of programs and facilities have shifted their focus from production, research, and/or development to environmental remediation and restoration, where DOE will literally be breaking new ground and setting standards for others to follow. In addition, Department staffing levels are declining to meet Congressional budget constraints. Still, in the face of a changing mission and a reduced work force, DOE continues to actively use and support the development of voluntary standards to meet its needs. In FY 1998, the number of voluntary standards adopted for use increased to 840 (809 in 1997). However, the number of individuals

participating in voluntary standards activities decreased to 681 (871 in 1997), and the number of documented participations in standards developing groups declined to 1321 (1540 in 1997). We believe this reflects the very significant “downsizing” and budget cuts experienced by DOE in recent years, rather than any reduced interest on the part of Departmental organizations.

Also, DOE (through the TSPO) is continuing its initiative (in response to contacts from voluntary standards organizations on how the Department is meeting PL 104-113) to better define “candidate” DOE technical standards for conversion to voluntary standards. We are continuing to work with representatives of the American National Standards Institute’s Nuclear Standards Board (ANSI-NSB) on the conversion of selected DOE technical standards to voluntary standards. (Four candidate standards have been identified to date).

In addition, DOE sponsored a meeting in August 1998 with representatives of several voluntary standards organizations (ASTM, ASME, ANS, NFPA, IEEE, et al.) as part of a more structured program interface with the voluntary standards community to promote developing new standards that may be needed through those organizations rather than within DOE.

Other highlights of DOE’s interaction with voluntary standards bodies include the following:

- From FY 1993 through FY 1997, DOE conducted annual national workshops promoting the Technical Standards Program and the use of voluntary standards within the Department. Each workshop was attended by approximately 150 standards developers and users.
- In FY 1998, DOE hosted the first-ever Federal Technical Standards Workshop with the goal of furthering the implementation of PL 104-113 throughout the Federal government. The Workshop was cosponsored with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Partnership in Reliability, Maintainability, and Supportability (RMS) Standards. More than 200 standards developers and users attended the workshop. Another Federal Technical Standards Workshop is being planned for FY 2000.
- In addition to the ANSI-NSB, DOE representatives participate on ANSI’s Board of Directors and Executive Standards Council. DOE also participates in a number of international standards groups such as ISO/TC 85, Nuclear Energy, ISO/TC 176, Quality Assurance, and ISO/TC 207, Environmental Management.

Reporting Requirements for OMB Circular A-119:

- 1) The number of voluntary consensus standards bodies in which there is agency participation, as well as the number of agency employees participating.
 - Number of standards bodies: 65
 - Number of agency personnel participating: 681
 - Total number of agency participations: 1321
- 2) The number of voluntary consensus standards the agency has used since October 1, 1997, based on the procedures set forth in sections 11 and 12 of the Circular: 840

- 3) Identification of voluntary consensus standards that have been substituted for government-unique standards as a result of an agency review under section 15b(7) of the Circular: 0
- 4) An evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy and recommendations for any changes.

Response – The guidance in OMB Circular A-119 appears to be sufficient in terms of outlining the basic functions and responsibilities of Federal agency standards management and standards participation activities. It allows sufficient latitude for each Federal agency to develop its own approach tailored to specific agency needs, and places the emphasis on outcomes rather than processes.

- 5) As required by PL 104-113, when the agency used government-unique standards in-lieu-of voluntary consensus standards.

Response – There were no recorded cases in FY 1998 where the Department selected to use an internal standard in-lieu-of an equivalent, existing voluntary standard.