

Mr. John H. Ferguson, Vice President  
ASME Nuclear Codes and Standards  
Three Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10016-5990

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

This letter is in response to your letter of December 9, 1999, regarding NRC's anticipated actions regarding NQA-1(1997). Your letter noted that you expected a response to three items:

- 1) Identification of current specific staff concerns with NQA-1 (1997);
- 2) Staff participation in the BNCS NQA-1 Endorsement Task Group; and
- 3) The extent of the NRC's continuing participation in the NQA Committee.

Subsequent to receipt of your letter, we arranged a meeting on December 16, 1999, between you and Ashok Thadani, Director of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, Tom King, and me. During that meeting, Mr. Thadani expressed support for ASME's activities but indicated that absent compelling industry support for NRC undertaking a detailed review of NQA-1 (1997), or evidence of a substantive weakness in our currently endorsed standards related to QA, we could not justify committing the resources to such a review.

Thus, the staff will not undertake the detailed review needed to provide a list of specific concerns with NQA-1 (1997). The concerns that have been raised by individual staff members do not reflect the comprehensive review that needs to take place for the staff to provide you a complete set of comments. Similarly, we will not be participating in the BNCS NQA-1 Endorsement Task Group. Finally, we are continuing our internal review of staff participation on the NQA Committee. It is likely that NRC participation will be more limited than it has been in the past, but we do anticipate a level of participation.

The NRC does remain committed to the ASME Codes and Standards process, and to consensus standards in general. In the event that substantial industry interest in NQA-1 (1997) develops, we would be willing to reconsider review of this standard.

Mr. John H. Ferguson

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If you have any questions on the staff's position, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Mayfield  
NRC Standards Executive

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