

March 23, 2001

Mr. John Ferguson
Chairman, Board of Nuclear Codes and Standards
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
NE Utilities
P.O. Box 128
Waterford, CT 06385-0128

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

Thank you for your response to my letter of January 19, 2001. I am pleased to know that ASME, as part of their approval process, will be seeking public review and comment on the next revision of the ASME Standard on Probabilistic Risk Assessment. It is important that all stakeholders are involved in the development of the standard, and therefore, notification, distribution and access of the standard for review and comment should be as broad as possible, and not necessarily limited to only those who have previously commented. Once ASME has issued the next revision for public review and comment, to help assure the above process, we will also notify our stakeholders who may be interested.

I understand that a date of June 8, 2001, has been agreed to for the project team to complete and submit Revision 14 to the Committee on Nuclear Risk Management for balloting with concurrent public review and comment. Since the public review and comment period is in parallel with the balloting, it is our understanding that a reballot will occur if there are substantive changes as a result of the public review. Further, given this date, I understand that we can expect that ASME will be able to submit this standard to ANSI for approval as an American National Standard by the end of this calendar year (December 30, 2001). Regarding both NRC and industry needs, this date is timely. I look forward to continued progress on the standard and to receiving feedback, via the public comment process and our participation on the project team, regarding stakeholder views on this document. We will continue to participate and provide the necessary support to help ensure the timely completion of this important activity.

I look forward to receiving the next revision for review and comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or Mary Drouin ((301) 415-6675, email mxd@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

/RA/ original signed by Roy Zimmerman for

Ashok C. Thadani, Director
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

cc: Samuel Collins, NRC

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*** Previously concurred**

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