

IEEE 802
Local and Metropolitan Area Network Standards Committee



Paul Nikolich
Chair, IEEE 802 LMSC
3 Barberry Way
Essex Fells, NJ 07021
cell: 857.205.0050

To: Riccardo Mariani, CS VP of Standards
(rmariani@nvidia.com)
Leila De Floriani, CS President
(deflo@umiacs.umd.edu)

CC: Sethi Ritu, CS SAB Vice Chair,
Debbie Brown, CS SAB Secy, Brian Kirk
and Melissa Russell CS Staff,
Konstantinos Karachalios, Sam Sciacca,
and Jonathan Goldberg, SA Staff
David Law, IEEE 802.3 WG Chair, Chad
Jones, P802.3bt Power Over Enet TF
Chair, George Zimmerman, P802.3cg
10Mbps Single Pair Enet TF Chair

SUBJECT: IEEE and National Fire Protection Association – changing relationship

DATE: 10 April 2020

Dear Riccardo and Leila,

This memo is to inform you about the changing relationship between the IEEE and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) with respect to standards development. It is to inform the IEEE Computer Society of two recent IEEE-SA BoG resolutions and seek the support of the IEEE Computer Society in ensuring a fair and equitable process for all IEEE technical communities that may now wish to establish a relationship with NFPA as a result of the IEEE-SA BoG resolutions. To do this we ask that the IEEE Computer Society engage with the IEEE-SA to understand the process that will be used and intervene if it appears that the process is diverging from a fair and equitable path.

The NFPA is non-profit organization 'devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards'. Among their activities is standards development, one well known standard developed by the NFPA is NFPA 70(R) National Electrical Code (NEC) which is adopted by US states and municipalities. NFPA standards development involves the development of draft standards by NFPA committees and panels consisting of individuals that represent organizations, or themselves, who are appointed by a NFPA governance committee, the NFPA Standards Council. Where the individual represents an organization the seat on the committee or panel is held by the organization, and that organization chooses who represents them.

The IEEE currently holds seats on some NFPA committees and panels. These seats are held by individuals that are defined as IEEE External representatives (ERs) governed by the IEEE-SA Operations Manual. They carry a 'directed vote' for the IEEE and these 'directed votes' are established by IEEE Standards Coordinating Committee (SCC) 18 under a process that requires this position to represent the consensus of IEEE SCC18 and any materially interested IEEE Technical Committee.

On Friday 3rd April 2020, the IEEE-SA Board of Governors (BoG) passed two resolutions
<<https://standards.ieee.org/about/bog/resolutions.html>>:

- The BOG terminates the appointments of External Representatives to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), effective 30 June 2020.
- The BOG directs IEEE SA staff to provide assistance to any technical community in IEEE that would like to create a relationship between that technical community and the NFPA.

As a result, IEEE will no longer have representation on NFPA committees and panels and all individuals that currently serve as IEEE ERs to NFPA will cease to be NFPA committee and panel members on 30th June 2020. If they wish to continue, they will need to reapply as a representative of an organization or apply as an individual. That organization could be an employer, an association, or potentially could be an IEEE technical community, but in that case, the individual will represent that IEEE technical community, not the IEEE. IEEE Technical Communities, such as IEEE Societies, IEEE Councils, IEEE Standards Committees, and IEEE Working Groups, can potentially now have organizational representatives on NFPA committees and panels, but the IEEE will not.

Unfortunately, the deadline to make such applications is 17th April 2020, with the next deadline four months after that. This will be a particular problem if applications by the 17th April 2020 are more likely to be accepted by NFPA due to the limited number of positions available on NFPA committees and panels.

We have however received an email that indicates that there are some individuals, that may have had some foreknowledge, involved in an efforts to have one IEEE Society designated as the new representative of all of IEEE to the NFPA. While there is no indication this effort will be successful, it highlights the need for a fair and equitable process that ensures all IEEE technical communities that have an interest in NFPA, including those within the IEEE Computer Society, have the same opportunity to build a relationship with the NFPA.

While NFPA is free to choose which IEEE technical communities it establishes relationships with, IEEE technical communities need to be able to approach the NFPA on the same basis, this should not be skewed by the IEEE towards one particular IEEE technical community or other. In addition, if the NFPA were to choose to establish a relationship or relationships with only some IEEE technical communities and choose not to with other IEEE technical communities, the IEEE has to ensure that the NFPA understand those IEEE technical communities it establishes relationships with only represent those IEEE technical communities, not the IEEE, and not other IEEE technical communities.

Regards,

/s/ Paul Nikolich

Paul Nikolich

Chair, IEEE 802 LAN/MAN Standards Committee
p.nikolich@ieee.org