

projects. To request more information on the proposed project or to obtain a copy of the data collection plans and instruments, call the NSF Clearance Officer on (703) 306-1243.

Comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Proposed Project: Separately budgeted current fund expenditures on research and development in the sciences and engineering performed by universities and colleges and their affiliated federally funded research and development centers—A mail survey, the Survey of Scientific and Engineering

Expenditures at Universities and Colleges, originated in fiscal year (FY) 1954 and has been conducted annually since FY 1972. The survey is the academic expenditure component of the NSF statistical program that seeks to "provide a central clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data on the availability of, and the current and projected need for, scientific and technical resources in the United States, and to provide a source of information for policy formulation by other agencies of the Federal government" as mandated in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950. The proposed project will continue the current survey cycle for three to five years. The FY 1996 and FY 1997 will be a statistical sample of approximately 518 institutions and FY 1998 a full survey population of about 700 institutions. The survey is conducted as a full survey population every 5 years and as a statistical sample in each of the 4 intervening years. These institutions account for over 95 percent of the Nation's academic R&D funds. The survey has provided continuity of

statistics on R&D expenditures by source of funds and by science & engineering (S&E) field, with separate data requested on current fund expenditures for research equipment by S&E field. Statistics from the survey are published in NSF's annual publication series Academic Science and Engineering R&D Expenditures and are available electronically on the World Wide Web.

The survey will be mailed primarily to the administrators at the Institutional Research Offices. To minimize burden, institutions are provided with (in addition to paper copy) an automatic survey questionnaire (ASQ) diskette, pre-loaded with the institutions previous years data and a complete program for editing and trend checking. Respondents are encouraged to submit their response via the ASQ diskette or electronically via internet. Approximately 60% responded via ASQ or electronically to this voluntary survey in FY 1994 and a total response rate of 99.6% was obtained. Burden estimates are as follows:

Total number of institutions	Doctorate-granting	Masters-granting	Bachelors degree or below
			Burden hours
FY 1992 480	20.8 hours	12.0 hours	4.4 hours.
FY 1993 700	21.0 hours	8.1 hours	5.2 hours.
FY 1994 518	21.6 hours	7.7 hours	4.3 hours.

Send comments to Herman Fleming, Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 485, Arlington, VA 22230. Written comments should be received by August 4, 1996.

Dated: June 5, 1996.

Herman G. Fleming,
NSF Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 96-14560 Filed 6-7-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555-01-M

NATIONAL SKILL STANDARDS BOARD

Request for Comments; Notice of Public Hearings

This notice announces the second in a series of public hearings to stimulate public dialogue on key issues relevant to the decision-making of the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB), and notifies the public of the dates, locations, and times of these hearings. The second round of public hearings will solicit the public's views on the nature, scope, and functions of an ideal

national system of workforce development, and to determine how skill standards can enhance that system.

The first series of hearings, held in April 1996, garnered valuable information from employers, vocational educators, parents, professional associations, union leaders, community organizations, state government agencies, teachers, and others. Their views provided a framework for the Board's development of a voluntary system of skill standards. The National Skill Standards Board will continue to develop its policies and approaches by sharing its preliminary thinking with the public before the Board's final adoption of policies.

Those providing testimony at the initial set of public hearings gave a broad range of comments on issues relating to NSSB's mission, skill standards' characteristics and uses, existing models for implementation, the role of voluntary partnerships, the identification of occupational clusters, and high performance/best practice workplaces. There was unanimous support for the mission and efforts of NSSB. There was a general consensus

that the NSSB should: (1) Learn from existing efforts to avoid reinventing the wheel; (2) involve all stakeholders in the process, but employers must lead the effort; (3) establish standards that are portable, flexible, integrated with academic standards and basic employability skills, and that are regularly updated; and (4) create a common lexicon to describe skills and standards. In addition, although there was common agreement on the necessity of clustering tasks or occupations, there was no consensus on the best method of clustering. Finally, there was no consensus on the issue of how the Board's work should relate to the concept of high performance/best practice workplaces or jobs. Many agreed that highly skilled jobs are integral to America's economic health, but they urged the Board to not focus solely on highly skilled jobs but on those that are most important to the economy.

Within future public hearings, the NSSB will solicit public comment on such topics as:

- Voluntary partnerships.

- Occupational skill clusters for skill standards development.
- Standards endorsement criteria.
- Assessment.
- Certification and accreditation.
- Civil rights issues in developing a voluntary system of skill standards.

DATES:

A. *Hearing Dates:* The dates of the second set of public hearings are:

- Wednesday, June 26, 1996: San Francisco, CA.
- Tuesday, July 9, 1996: Detroit, MI.
- Thursday, July 11, 1996: Washington, DC.

B. *Comment Dates for Public Hearings:* Comments and notices of intent to present oral and/or written statements at the hearings must be received 10 business days before the date of the hearing at which they will be presented. The requirements for the comments are set forth in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below. We strongly encourage responses to the Questions for Public Comment.

ADDRESSES: The locations of the three public hearings are as follows:

- San Francisco: Ramada Plaza Hotel at Fisherman's Wharf, 590 Bay St., San Francisco, CA 94133, (415) 885-4700.
- Detroit: Westin Hotel at Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI 48243, (313) 568-8000.
- Washington: Hyatt Regency at Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20001, (202) 737-1234.

Notice of intent to present oral statements or written statements must be mailed to NSSB Public Hearing Coordinator at the address below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: NSSB Public Hearing Coordinator, National Skill Standards Board, 1441 L Street, NW., Suite 9000, Washington, DC 20005-3512, (202)-254-8628, (202)-254-8646 (fax).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**Form of Public Comment**

The hearings will begin at 9:30 a.m. and adjourn at 1:00 p.m. To assist the NSSB in scheduling speakers, the written notice of intent to present oral comments should include the following information: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of each person to appear; (2) title and affiliation; and (3) the specific questions, issues or concerns that will be addressed.

Individuals who do not register in advance will be permitted to register and speak at each hearing, if time permits, in order of registration. Speakers should limit their oral remarks to no more than 10 minutes. Although it is anticipated that all persons desiring to speak will have an opportunity to do

so, time limits may not allow this to occur. However, all written statements will be accepted and incorporated into the public record. The proceedings will be audiotaped and transcribed.

Meeting Procedure and Objectives

Members of the National Skill Standards Board will comprise the hearing panel. A designated member of the NSSB will preside at each of the hearings. The Presiding Board Member will:

- (1) Regulate the course of the meeting, including the order of appearance of persons presenting oral statements;
- (2) Dispose of procedural matters; and
- (3) Limit the presentations to matters pertinent to the issues raised in this notice.

Background

The National Skill Standards Board was created by The National Skill Standards Act of 1994 (108 Stat 192, 20 U.S.C. 5933), signed into law by President Clinton on March 31, 1994. The Board's purpose as stated in the Act is "to serve as a catalyst in stimulating the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards and of assessment and certification of attainment of skill standards: (1) That will serve as a cornerstone of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills; (2) that will result in increased productivity, economic growth, and American economic competitiveness; and (3) that can be used consistent with civil rights laws" by the stakeholders enumerated in the Act: the nation, industries, employers, labor organizations, workers, students, entry-level workers, training providers, educators and government.

The Act also relates that this voluntary national system of skill standards will serve (1) to facilitate the transition to high performance work organizations; (2) to increase opportunities for minorities and women; and (3) to facilitate linkages between other components of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills.

The National Skill Standards Act calls for voluntary skill standards that "facilitate linkages between other components of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills." These other components include the educational system, school-to-work programs, welfare-to-work programs, job training programs, apprenticeship, occupational licensing and certification, literacy and basic skills programs, and one-stop career centers. NSSB welcomes comments on how skill standards can best contribute to the collaborative

efforts of employers, educators and trainers, government, other stakeholder groups, and individual workers in creating a model system that prepares individuals for the workplace.

Voluntary skill standards are essential to an effective workforce development system. Standards accomplish this purpose by communicating the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for individuals to succeed in the workplace. To adapt to the changing skill needs of the continuously evolving economy, Americans will need to engage in ongoing learning throughout their careers.

An ideal workforce development system effectively links public and private resources and programs to:

- Give students a strong foundation of academic and work-related skills;
- Develop career pathways for students to facilitate employment in rewarding careers;
- Provide employers with the skilled employees needed in today's and tomorrow's economy;
- Enable workforce entrants, the unemployed, and current workers to clearly understand the skills needed for success in current and future workplaces;
- Connect individuals with the education and training they need to meet voluntary skill standards; and
- Give states and localities a mechanism to ensure accountability and continual improvement in public education and training programs.

Voluntary skill standards allow individuals to easily transfer evidence of skill attainment from one education or training provider to another. A voluntary standards system also enables both individuals and programs to clearly identify the skills individuals already possess, so that they can acquire the new skills they need, not re-learn old skills. This ensures cost-effective programming and streamlined instructional programs.

An effective workforce development system gives people greater control over their own education and training. The current assortment of programs with different entry requirements and services makes it nearly impossible for individuals to navigate the bureaucracy and find the appropriate education and training. Everyone should have ready access to information on jobs, and the education and training needed to qualify for those jobs.

An effective workforce development system is one that:

- Is standards-driven: Standards provide a common framework for linking a diverse array of training providers and communicating clear

pathways to successful careers. Standards help people bridge the gap between their current skills and abilities and the workplace needs of the future.

- Is user-driven: The system must serve a wide range of users: employers seeking a skilled workforce; individuals who want to build their knowledge, skills and abilities; and educators and trainers who will meet the needs of both employers and learners.

- Offers users flexible, timely, high quality service delivery options: A flexible, adaptive and user-driven system is one that is easily accessed and can be tailored to meet an individual's requirements. Such a system offers users a variety of service providers that can assure timely, high quality education and training. Through the use of skill standards, individuals can "shop around" for the best training, and continue to learn and improve their earnings throughout their lifetimes.

- Communicates skill requirements clearly: An effective workforce development system enables employers, educators, trainers, workers, job seekers, students, parents and others to speak a common language, so that skill needs are clearly understood and effectively translated into relevant training and educational programs.

- Is based upon an effective, objective assessment of knowledge and skills.

In today's economy, individuals pursue extremely varied paths from school to work, and from one job or career to another. Academic and skill attainment should link clearly and easily with voluntary skill standards, so that individuals understand how to apply their knowledge and skills to different career areas. An effective, user-driven skill standards system should be responsive to different paths to careers, so that no one is excluded from well-paid jobs solely because he or she took a different path to acquiring the needed knowledge and skills.

Basing a workforce development system upon voluntary skill standards would permit more flexibility with respect to where instruction is offered, instructional methods, the education or training provider, and the duration of the program. Thus the same results can be achieved by a variety of paths. The integration of skill standards into a workforce development system will facilitate access to better jobs for people from all backgrounds, by redefining access and creating a more level playing field.

Training might be acquired on the job, in the classroom, or some combination of both. For example, adults could pursue more advanced skills in

vocational schools, or in programs offered by their employers and/or unions either in-house or under contract with a third party provider. Training might also take place in postsecondary educational institutions or through alternative education providers. In all cases, adults would have the information and access to the resources they need to keep their skills continuously refreshed.

A successful workforce development system requires a high level of coordination and communication among education and training providers, government agencies, employers, labor unions, and community members. In some countries, workforce development success is governed by long-standing partnerships of industry, education and organized labor, and is based on an understanding of their common interests in assuring a society made up of well-educated, highly-skilled individuals. If the United States is to maintain and improve its competitive edge, these parties must work together to promote a thriving society that offers meaningful careers, enviable living standards, and long-term employability to every American.

Questions

We invite employers, employer associations, organized labor, educators and trainers, community organizations, parents, state and local governments, and all other interested individuals or organizations to respond to the following questions:

1. How have you used voluntary skill standards to improve, coordinate, and streamline education and training at the state and/or local levels? What lessons can you offer the NSSB based on these experiences?

2. What have been the challenges, opportunities and lessons you have learned about the *roles and responsibilities* of employers, organized labor, educators, workers, students, parents, public agencies and others? How can these groups best work together to support a voluntary skill standards system?

3. How can voluntary skill standards most effectively support states and local communities (including all partners in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors) in:

- a. responding to the challenge of block grants,

- b. coordinating and improving the following initiatives:

- One-stop career centers,
- Welfare-to-work programs,
- School-to-work programs,

- Job training and employment programs,
- Employment services,
- Literacy and basic skills programs,
- High school equivalency degree and alternative education programs, and/or
- Union and/or employer-sponsored training.

- c. linking the state's academic requirements to the future skill needs of the economy?

4. How can voluntary skill standards most effectively support a strong role for industry in a national workforce development system?

5. How can voluntary skill standards help enhance a national workforce development system that improves services for individuals from all backgrounds, and enables them to transfer their skills across occupations, firms, industries, and across the country?

- a. How do your activities fit into the national workforce development system?

- b. What is the proper role for the NSSB within a workforce development system that prepares youth and adults for the challenges of continuously evolving workplaces?

- c. What is your vision of an ideal national workforce development system and what are the critical elements of such a system?

Signed at Washington, D.C. this 4th day of June 1996.

Judy Gray,

Executive Director, National Skill Standards Board.

[FR Doc. 96-14603 Filed 6-7-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-23-M

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-483

Union Electric Company, Callaway Plant, Unit 1; Consideration of Transfer of Control of Ownership of Licensee and Opportunity for Public Comment on Antitrust Issues

Notice is hereby given that the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering approval under 10 CFR 50.80 of the transfer of control of the license for the Callaway Plant, Unit 1, that would result from the consummation of the proposed merger agreement between Union Electric Company, the licensee for Callaway Plant, Unit 1, and CIPSCO Incorporated. By letter dated February 23, 1996, as supplemented by letter dated April 24, 1996, Union Electric