

IEEE 802
Local and Metropolitan Area Network Standards Committee
Homepage at: <http://ieee802.org/>

Paul Nikolich
Chair, IEEE 802 LMSC
18 Bishops Lane
Lynnfield, MA 01940
cell: 857.205.0050
Fax: 781.334.2255

To: Mr. Li Zhonghai
Chairman
Standardization Administration of China (SAC)
No. 9 Madian East Road
Haidian District, Beijing 100088, China
Fax: +86 10 8226 0684

CC: Minister Wang Xudong
Ministry of Information Industry (MII)
People's Republic of China
13, West Chang An Ave.
Beijing 100804, China
fax: +86 10 6836 6494 / +86 10 6601 1370

SUBJECT: IEEE 802 LMSC and SAC Standards GB15629.11 and GB 1529.1102

DATE: November 23, 2003

Dear Mr. Li,

I am writing on behalf of the IEEE 802 LAN/MAN Standards Committee, an international open standards developing organization with worldwide scope and participants from many countries, including China. We operate in accordance with the "Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards" of the World Trade Organization. We have a close relationship with ISO/IEC and ITU. Many of our standards have become formally internationalized through ISO/IEC. For example, IEEE Standard 802.11 is also published as ISO/IEC Standard 8802.11:1999. Note also that IEEE has recently become an ITU-R Sector Member as an international organization.

We appreciate the networking expertise in China. We welcome Chinese participation in the IEEE 802 process, recognizing the importance to the world community and to China of increased participation from your country. We hope to become more familiar with the Chinese standardization system and to make you more familiar with our work and procedures.

We understand that the Standardization Administration of China (SAC) establishes and oversees national standards within the People's Republic of China. It is our understanding that the SAC has recently moved to establish standards GB15629.11 and GB1529.1102 and that these are similar to IEEE Standard 802.11, the wireless local area network (WLAN) standard that has been developed and maintained within the IEEE 802 LAN/MAN Standards Committee.

While we appreciate the similarity between these two GB standards and IEEE Standard 802.11, we are concerned regarding the requirement to support the new WLAN Authentication and Privacy Infrastructure (WAPI) security protocol. We believe that globally-adopted standards provide great benefits both for manufacturers and users, and we have seen many examples of the successes of our standards. Therefore, we are always concerned by activities that limit their global use. We believe that mandatory implementation of the WAPI protocols would unnecessarily fracture the world market for WLAN products. We are concerned that mandatory

use of the standard would prohibit the use of 802.11 standard products and thereby limit choice and increase costs to users.

We recognize that 802.11 security is not optimal and have been working to improve it through the 802.11i project. We would like to better understand your concerns and see if they can be met through the current 802.11i draft standard. That draft could be made available through the appointment of a bilateral liaison.

Finally, we are excited to notify you that the IEEE 802.16 Working Group on Broadband Wireless Access, one of the IEEE 802 Working Groups, has accepted an invitation to meet in Shenzhen, China, probably on 17-20 May 2004; for more details, please see <http://ieee802.org/16/meetings/mtg31>. The meeting of the Working Group (whose area of interest is Wireless Metropolitan Area Networks and is not directly related to WLAN standards) is open to all who wish to participate, subject to a participation fee to cover only the costs of the meeting facilities.

Perhaps the occasion of this meeting would be an opportunity for high-level discussions with SAC and IEEE-SA, including an exchange of information on how the two bodies operate and formulation of some concrete steps to facilitate increased Chinese participation in IEEE. If this is of interest to you, I would be happy to investigate the availability of the IEEE-SA leadership.

I encourage you to contact me with any questions.

Best regards,

Paul Nikolich

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