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## Station Battery Update: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 855 for the Installation of Energy Storage Systems

### Key Highlights

- A coalition of electric utility members and affiliates participated in the recent NFPA Technical Meeting, where NFPA's proposed Standard 855 was debated. At the meeting, vote was secured for a scope-level exclusion for utilities already adhering to NESC requirements.
- Despite an affirmative vote at the meeting, the NFPA Technical Committee subsequently rejected this vote.
- EEI has filed an Appeal with the NFPA Standards Council to reconsider this at their August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- NRECA continues to monitor this process and work with EEI to represent our members' needs and perspective on this important matter.

### What has changed?

Cooperatives, municipals, and investor owned utilities (IOUs) have expressed significant concerns regarding the expected high costs and undue burden of falling under the scope of the National Fire Protection Association's proposed Standard for the Installation of Energy Storage Systems (NFPA 855)<sup>1</sup>. In response, EEI organized a coalition of electric utility members and affiliates to represent our industry's interests during the development of NFPA 855. The task force submitted a Notice of Intent to Make a Motion (NITMAM) to alter the direction of the new standard before it is officially adopted. At the NFPA Technical Meeting held in San Antonio, TX on June 20, the NITMAM was debated for nearly two hours before being decided in favor of the blanket exemption to NFPA 855 for facilities covered under the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC).

At a subsequent meeting of the NFPA Technical Committee, however, this vote was overturned by a vote of 23 against versus 17 in favor. This has led EEI to the final option of filing an Appeal to the NFPA Standards Council. A meeting has been set for a limited number of representatives supporting the appeal on August 6 at NFPA headquarters in Boston, MA.

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<sup>1</sup> NFPA 855 (Standard for the Installation of Energy Storage Systems) is a new National Fire Protection Association Standard being developed to define the design, construction, installation, commissioning, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of stationary energy storage systems including traditional battery systems such as those used by utilities.

## What do cooperatives need to know or do about it?

At this time, no action is needed on the part of co-ops. If the appeal is supported by the NFPA Standards Council, the blanket exemption for co-op facilities covered under the NESC will go into effect as part of NFPA 855.

If not, there are specific exemptions already included in the NFPA standard for several different requirements related to electric utilities. By having them spread throughout the document and not included in the Scope, however, it will be easier for them to be modified or deleted in future revisions of NFPA 855. Examples of items this could lead to in the future are: installation of fire suppression systems, additional clearance and space requirements, additional alarms, monitoring equipment, and remote disconnection capability. This would apply to new or retrofitted substations, as well as battery storage systems connected directly to the grid. This is the reason we are seeking the blanket exemption for utility facilities covered by the NESC.

### Additional Resources:

- NRECA Advisory: [Explanation of NFPA 855 and Potential Impacts on Cooperatives](#) (August 2018)

### Contacts for Questions:

- **Robert W. Harris** NRECA Senior Principal, T & D Engineering Office: 703.907.5753 Cell: 571.205.3189 [robert.harris@nreca.coop](mailto:robert.harris@nreca.coop)
- **Bill Pfister** Edison Electric Institute Office: 202.508.5531 Cell: 404.405.0770 [BPfister@eei.org](mailto:BPfister@eei.org)
- **James Houston, PE** Southern Company Services Transmission Engineering - Chief Engineer Office: 205.257.4069 Cell: 205.639.3353 [JEHOUSTO@southernco.com](mailto:JEHOUSTO@southernco.com)