A Brief Note Regarding Defect Report
Processing Procedures

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This note contains some brief personal observations regarding the current Defect Report processing procedures within X3J11 and WG14. It also suggests a small but important modification in the current handling of Defect Reports.

It appears that many of the Defect Reports that have been considered by X3J11 at the Kona and San Jose meetings were perhaps submitted during the time when 'Requests For Interpretations' were the order of the day, and before the current Defect Report processing regime was adopted. Specifically, many of the Defect Reports considered by X3J11 at Kona and San Jose do not appear to be real Defect Reports at all, but merely requests for guidance in interpreting the standard *as it is written*.

Although X3J11 and WG14 certainly constitute the 'courts of last resort' for resolving disputes arising from varying interpretations of the standard, I do not believe that it is the job of X3J11 or WG14 to develop tutorial material about the standard which merely provides additional guidance (to those reading the standard) while not actually fixing any defects or addressing any explicitly stated *perceived defects* in the standard. In short, I do not feel that it is an appropriate or productive use of precious committee time to develop responses to Defect Reports which themselves fail to clearly assert at least one real or perceived defect in the standard.

Rather than spending committee time developing tutorial material which might assist those attempting to merely interpret the standard *as written* (which is more properly the job of those writing textbooks about the C language), I would respectfully suggest to both X3J11 and WG14 that these committees should provide only a minimal formal response to all Defect Reports which fail to assert the existence of any specific defect in the standard. The formal response provided in such cases could perhaps be phrased as follows:

> This is not a valid defect report, as no specific defect is being asserted. Thus, the committee declines to provide a response.

The intent of this suggestion is merely to allow the X3J11 and WG14 committees to concentrate their limited resources on the development of responses to *actual Defect Reports* (as opposed to requests for tutorial material which might be of assistance in interpreting the standard *as written*).

Given the large number of obscure and difficult to interpret aspects of the existing C standard, and given the large number of pending Defect Reports which merely ask 'interpretation' type questions (without clearly intending to point out a defect in the standard) I believe that adoption of this (suggested) approach to Defect Report processing is necessary to insure that the X3J11 and WG14 committees will be able to devote their efforts first and foremost towards the development of responses to actual Defect Reports.