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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NRC SCHEDULES TWO MEETINGS REGARDING INSPECTION OF CORE SHROUD
AT NINE MILE POINT 1 NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold two meetings on Thursday, September 24, to discuss issues involving the inspection of a reactor component, the core shroud, at the Nine Mile Point 1 nuclear power plant. Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation operates the plant, which is located in Scriba, N.Y.

Both meetings will take place in Snygg Hall (Building 24) at the State University of New York's Oswego campus. Snygg Hall is at the corner of Washington Boulevard and Centennial Drive in Oswego. Free parking will be available in a lot adjacent to the building.

The first session will be between the NRC and the utility and run from 5 to 7 p.m. in Room 203. During that meeting, agency staff will review Niagara Mohawk's request to postpone an inspection of the core shroud, a large stainless-steel cylinder that surrounds the reactor core and controls the flow of water through it. Niagara Mohawk wants to inspect the component after 14,500 hours of hot operation (about 19 months) during the present operating cycle, rather than after 10,600 hours (about 14 months), which is its current commitment to the NRC. That change, if approved, would allow Nine Mile Point 1 to stay on-line through the end of the current cycle in April 1999.

At the second session, scheduled for 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in Room 102, NRC staff will receive comments and questions from members of the public and local officials regarding the utility's request.

Niagara Mohawk found vertical weld cracking in the boiling-water reactor's core shroud through inspections performed during a refueling outage in 1997. (Contributing to such cracking are operating time, coolant chemistry, carbon content, neutron flux, residual stress from welding and fabrication and operating stresses.)

Following an NRC staff evaluation that determined the plant could be run safely, the agency in May 1997 authorized restart of the plant. One condition was that the reactor water chemistry be maintained consistent with Electric Power Research Institute guidelines to minimize the growth of vertical weld cracks.

The company has agreed to provide the NRC with a proposed inspection plan for the core shroud at least three months before the next refueling outage.

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