



NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION/300 ERIE BOULEVARD WEST, SYRACUSE, N.Y. 13202/TELEPHONE (315) 474-1511

May 2, 1980

Mr. Boyce H. Grier, Director
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region I
631 Park Avenue
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Re: Nine Mile Point Unit 1
Docket No. 50-220
DPR-63

Dear Mr. Grier:

As stated in our letter of December 17, 1979, Niagara Mohawk has a control blade changeout program which assures that control blades do not exceed the lifetime limit of 34% B10 depletion averaged over the upper 1/4 of the blade. This program is in compliance with the preferred action contained in I. E. Bulletin 79-26.

In addition to Niagara Mohawk's program for control blade changeout, your staff requested information on Niagara Mohawk's plans regarding shutdown margin testing and examinations of highly exposed control blades. During the spring 1979 refueling, Niagara Mohawk conducted a shutdown margin test in accordance with plant technical specifications to demonstrate that the reactor can be made subcritical. With the core in its most reactive condition, cold and xenon free, the analytically strongest control blade was fully withdrawn from the core. A second control blade was withdrawn to a position which analytically resulted in an insertion of reactivity greater than 0.25% ΔK. The reactor remained subcritical throughout the test. These test results were reported to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in our Cycle 6 startup test report. A similar test will be performed during future cycles. Since boron loss has not been observed prior to the blade lifetime limit of 34% B10 depletion, a shutdown margin adder to account for boron loss in control blades is not required at Nine Mile Point Unit 1.

Due to the aforementioned control blade changeout program, Niagara Mohawk does not plan to perform a destructive examination of control blades at Nine Mile Point Unit 1.

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Currently, generic programs for control blade examinations are being developed throughout the nuclear industry (through EPRI). These programs are expected to provide data applicable to control blades at Nine Mile Point Unit 1. Examinations at each plant would only serve to duplicate this generic work and is seen as unnecessary. Niagara Mohawk will monitor the results of these generic programs and, if necessary, revise the control blade limiting lifetime criteria.

Very truly yours,



T. E. Lempges
Vice President, Nuclear Generation

SWW:jk

