



# RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES

March 5, 1990

Ronald R Bellamy, Chief  
Facilities Radiological Safety and Safeguards Branch  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Region I  
475 Allendale Road  
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Dear Mr. Bellamy:

Enclosed is our report on the Nine Mile Point 1 reactor. We were quite disappointed with the lax regulatory vigilance by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the fact that the company was not fined for the incident.

\* The incident will cause additional exposures to workers involved in the clean-up, and will cost \$18 million. This is an action that should have been immediately reported to the Commission under 10CFR20.403.

\* Niagara Mohawk's use of the sub-basement of the radwaste building as a reservoir or holding tank was an action not authorized by the plant's Technical Specifications, and requiring a safety evaluation in accordance with 10CFR50.59.

\* Niagara Mohawk's loss of records of the barrel contents is a violation of Commission's regulations.

For this 12+ year cover-up, Niagara Mohawk should have been heavily fined by the NRC.

Two aspects of the incident should be more fully examined by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

A. Inspection report No. 50-220/89-80 does not clearly specify the circumstances regarding the release of contaminated water to Lake Ontario July 8, 1981. As you report shows, due to insufficient tank storage, Niagara Mohawk flooded the basement on July 7 to the 229' level. This incident floated and overturned the radioactive waste barrels. Because of the need to dispose of additional radioactive water, this was followed by the release of 40,000 gallons of contaminated water to Lake Ontario. The processing of the 50,000 gallons or so of radioactive water already located in the sub-basement gave rise to a large inventory of radioactive waste subsequently shipped to a licensed radioactive waste facility. It is not clear that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was aware that the total amount of excess water was at least 90,000 gallons.

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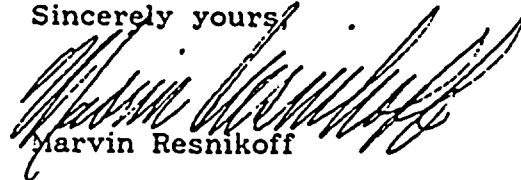


B. As the company reported in the Enforcement Conference Report No. 50-220/89-80, the closed loop cooling system was out of service, impacting the waste evaporator operation. Based on increased levels of cesium in the environment, it appears that the evaporator was being directly vented to the environment. The evaporate does not appear to have been recirculated to the reactor.

Without more rigorous enforcement of Commission regulations, the company's irresponsible health and safety practices will not be improved.

cc: R Pollard  
Rep L Slaughter

Sincerely yours,



Marvin Resnikoff

