UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

RELATED TO AMENDMENT NO. 23 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-69

NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION

NINE MILE POINT NUCLEAR POWER STATION, UNIT NO. 2

DOCKET NO. 50-410

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated November 9, 1989, as superseded April 10, 1990, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (the licensee or NMPC) submitted an application to modify the Technical Specifications which contain cycle-specific parameters. These changes were proposed in accordance with Generic Letter 88-16. License Amendment No. 17, issued on June 19, 1990, in response to this application, addressed all the changes proposed by the licensee with the exception of Technical Specifications 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, Design Features-Reactor Core. The proposed changes to Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 are addressed in the following evaluation. By these changes, the fuel-type-specific description of the fuel assemblies and control rod assemblies would be replaced by a more general description.

2.0 EVALUATION

Section 5.3.1 currently describes a specific fuel assembly design. The proposed change removes the specific fuel assembly design and replaces it with a more generic description but still requires that the fuel assembly be one that has been approved for use in BWRs. The core operating limits in use by Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation are determined by General Electric Standard Applications for Reactor Fuel (GESTAR II), which is NRC-approved. Since NRC approval of GESTAR II is based on review of the specific fuel assembly designs described therein, NMPC will continue to use fuel assemblies that have been pre-approved by the NRC; any use of analytical methodologies and/or fuel designs that are not within the scope of the latest approved version of GESTAR II would require an amendment request.

The proposed changes to Section 5.3.2 similarly provides a generic description. Section 5.3.2 currently specifies a control rod assembly design that uses boron carbide powder (B_4C) as the control material. The proposed change would provide that the control material shall be boron carbide powder and/or Hafnium metal. Hafnium metal is an NRC-approved control material and has been used in rod configurations similar to the Nine Mile Point design.

3.0 SUMMARY

The staff has reviewed the proposed changes to Technical Specification Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 on Design Features and finds these changes to be acceptable.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

This amendment involves a change in a requirement with respect to the installation or use of the facility components located within the restricted areas as defined in 10 CFR Part 20. The staff has determined that this amendment involves no significant increase in the amounts, and no significant change in the types, of any effluents that may be released offsite and that there is no significant increase in individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. The Commission has previously issued a proposed finding that this amendment involves no significant hazards consideration and there has been no public comment on such finding. Accordingly, this amendment meets the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR 51.22(c)(9). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b) no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of this amendment.

CONCLUSION

We have concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, and (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations and the issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Dated: October 12, 1990

PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTOR:
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