

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION

DOCKET NO. 50-220

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of a revision to an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, to Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (the licensee) for Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station Unit No. 1, located at the licensee's site in Oswego County, New York.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action:

By letter dated July 9, 1992, the licensee requested a revision to a schedular exemption granted on March 20, 1992, pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a) from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, regarding: (1) leak testing of the emergency condenser condensate return line valves 39-03, -04, -05, and -06; (2) leak testing of the shutdown cooling system isolation valves 38-01, -02, -12, and -13; and (3) that the leakage of these valves be included in the 0.60 L_a acceptance criteria for Type B and C tests. The March 20, 1992, schedular exemption had been issued as an extension to two previously-issued schedular exemptions (October 17, 1988 and August 29, 1989). The requested revision would delete emergency condenser condensate return line valves 39-05 and 39-06 from the March 20, 1992, exemption and provide justification for continuing a schedular exemption for emergency condenser

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condensate return line check valves 39-03 and 39-04. The previously approved (March 20, 1992) portion of the schedular exemption for the shutdown cooling system isolation valves (38-01, -02, -12, and -13) would also be continued.

The March 20, 1992, schedular exemption was issued to be valid until startup from the fall of 1994 refueling outage since the NRC staff determined that the exemption would not cause undue risk to the public health and safety and since special circumstances existed. The special circumstances included a chemical decontamination of the reactor coolant system and a single draining of the reactor vessel both planned for the 1994 refueling outage which will emphasize mechanical work. Performance of the chemical decontamination and performance of only a single draining of the reactor vessel are expected to reduce overall occupational exposures by approximately 100 person-rem and will also reduce the volume of radwaste generated.

As a result of an extended forced outage that began on May 1, 1992, the licensee was required to gain access to and remove emergency condenser condensate return line check valves 39-03 and 39-04 rather than delay this access until the fall of 1994 refueling outage. Therefore, the NRC staff requested the licensee to reevaluate the basis for the March 20, 1992, schedular exemption.

The duration of the forced outage that began on May 1, 1992, has resulted in the September 1992 refueling outage (reload 12) being rescheduled to early 1993 and reload 13 being rescheduled from fall of 1994 to early 1995. This forced outage has also enabled the licensee to delete emergency condenser condensate return line valves 39-05 and 39-06 from the March 20, 1992,



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exemption since these valves will be tested prior to restart to ensure compliance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The revised schedular exemption is required to permit the licensee to startup and operate the plant until startup from the refueling outage currently scheduled for early 1995. The existing shutdown cooling system isolation valves and the emergency condenser condensate return line check valves (39-03 and 39-04) are not designed to 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, leak requirements. Testing of check valves being procured as replacements for the existing check valves determined that the replacements would not meet the licensee's system design specifications. Replacement check valves which meet the licensee's system design requirements are not currently available and will not be available for the refueling outage scheduled to begin in January 1993. Without this revision to the previously-granted schedular exemption, restart and operation of this plant after its current forced outage would be delayed until the necessary modifications and testing were completed.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The proposed revision to the previously-granted exemption would allow the licensee to continue to operate the plant until the emergency condenser condensate return line check valves and the shutdown cooling isolation valves are modified during the early 1995 refueling outage so that these valves can be leak tested in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J.

The environmental effects of a design basis loss-of-coolant accident involving emergency condenser tubing with the condensate return line check



valves leaking in excess of the Appendix J limits were evaluated in the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (53 FR 37376) issued in conjunction with the October 17, 1988, exemption. That assessment concluded that there would be no significant radiological or non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the October 17, 1988, exemption. Likewise, the environmental effects of leakage past the shutdown cooling system isolation valves in excess of the Appendix J limits (during normal operation, shutdown, and accident conditions) were evaluated in the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (54 FR 26279) issued in conjunction with the August 29, 1989, exemption. That assessment also concluded that there would be no significant radiological or non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the August 29, 1989, exemption. Similar conclusions were made in the Notice of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (57 FR 2791) for the extension of these exemptions issued on March 20, 1992. The proposed revision of the March 20, 1992, exemption will not change the environmental effects (determined to be not significant) of excessive leakage past these valves. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological or non-radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed extensions to these exemptions.

Alternative to the Proposed Action:

The NRC staff has concluded that there is no measurable impact associated with the proposed revision of this exemption. Therefore, alternatives to the proposed extension of these exemptions will have either no environmental impact or greater environmental impact.



The principal alternative would be to deny the requested revision of this exemption. Such action would not reduce environmental impacts of the Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station Unit No. 1 operations and would result in unwarranted delays in plant startup and operation.

Alternative Use of Resources:

The actions associated with the granting of the proposed revision to this exemption as detailed above do not involve the use of resources not previously considered in connection with the "Final Environmental Statement Related to Operation of Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, Unit No. 1," dated January 1974.

Agencies and Persons Consulted:

The NRC staff reviewed the licensee's submittal that supports the proposed revision to the exemption discussed above. The NRC staff did not consult other agencies or persons.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed revision to this exemption.

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

For further details with respect to this action, see the request for the revision to this exemption as listed herein, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW.,



Washington, DC and at the Penfield Library, State University of New York,
Oswego, New York 13126.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 15th day of July 1992.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Robert A. Capra

Robert A. Capra, Director
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation



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July 15, 1992

Mr. B. Ralph Sylvia
Executive Vice President
Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation
301 Plainfield Road
Syracuse, New York 13212

Dear Mr. Sylvia:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT FOR NINE MILE POINT NUCLEAR STATION UNIT NO. 1 (TAC NO.
M84016)

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a "Notice of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact." This notice relates to your application dated July 9, 1992, in which you requested a revision to the schedular exemption granted in the Commission's letter dated March 20, 1992, regarding relief from certain requirements in 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J.

This notice has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,
Original signed by:
Robert A. Capra, Director
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Environmental Assessment

cc w/enclosure:
See next page

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