

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 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.

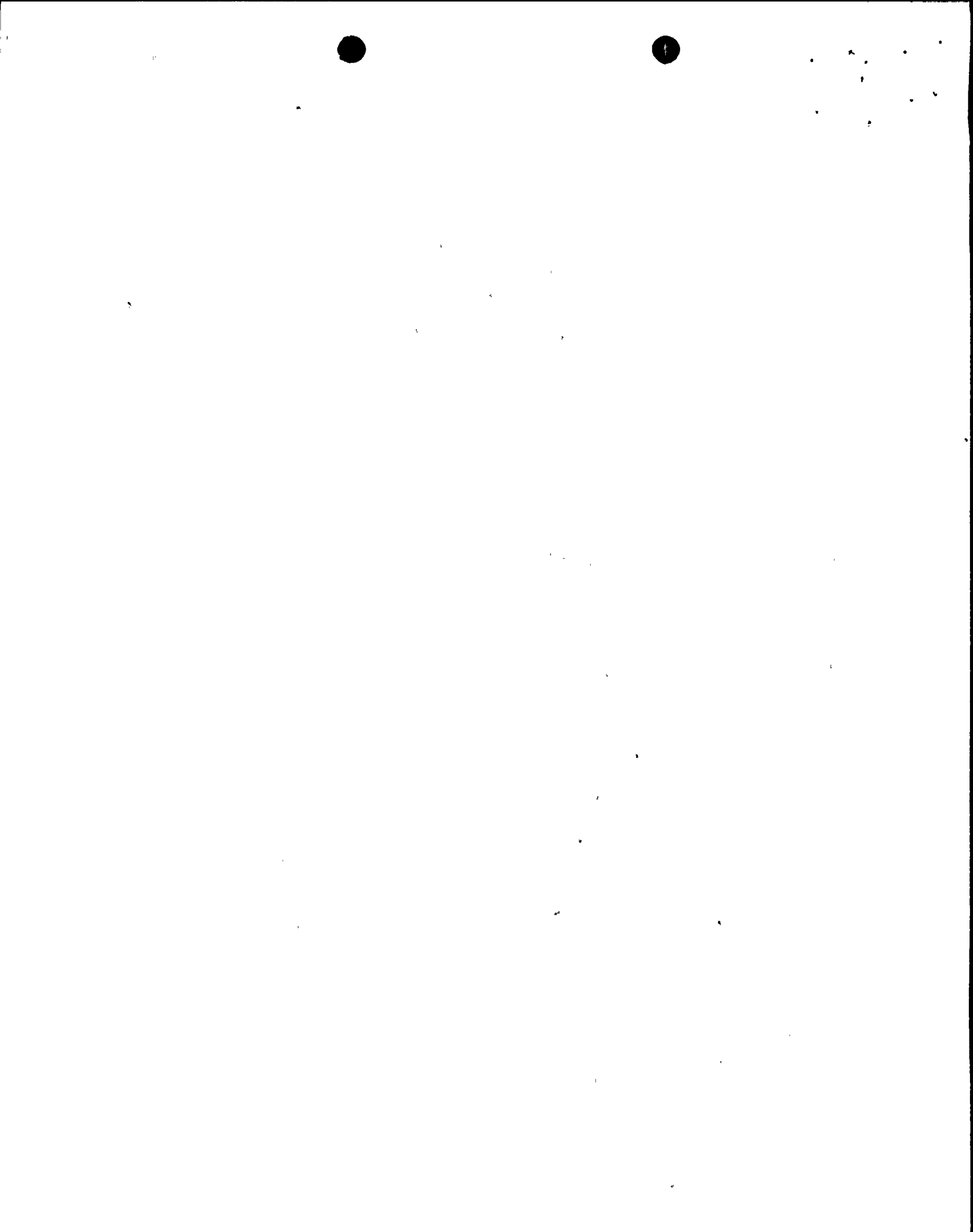
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Identification of Proposed Action:

By letter dated November 3, 1992, which superseded the licensee's application dated October 14, 1992, the licensee requested a schedular exemption pursuant to 10 CFR 50.12(a) from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J, Section III.D.3. Specifically, the licensee requested temporary relief from the requirement to perform local leak rate tests (LLRTs) at intervals of no greater than 2 years for 39 Type C tests. A one-time only delay, up to a maximum of 7 weeks, was requested for the performance of these leakage tests. The licensee's request was necessitated by a proposed delay in the start of the next refueling outage (RFO-12) of Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station Unit No. 1 from January 2, 1993, to February 19, 1993.

The Need for the Proposed Action:

The schedular exemption is required to permit the licensee to operate the plant until February 19, 1993, the proposed start date for RFO-12. The refueling outage is currently scheduled to begin on



January 2, 1993, with an end date of about February 25, 1993. However, based on projections from the New York Power Pool (NYPP), the current schedule may impact the ability of the NYPP to provide reliable power during the winter peak load period. Accounting for planned maintenance, required reserve, and normal unplanned outages, the NYPP is projecting net margin deficiencies during the period from January 3, 1993, through February 20, 1993.

Consequently, the licensee has determined that the most prudent and effective course of action would be to delay the start of RFO-12 approximately 7 weeks until February 19, 1993.

The licensee has stated that during the forced outage that began on May 1, 1992, and ended on August 8, 1992, it recognized that the start of RFO-12, originally scheduled to begin on September 11, 1992, would be impacted due to insufficient fuel burnup. The current outage start date of January 2, 1993, was established at that time, and the licensee performed the Types B and C leak tests during the forced outage required to support the revised start date. The licensee became aware of the NYPP projections of net margin deficiencies for the period January 3, 1993, through February 20, 1993, subsequent to the startup from the forced outage.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action:

The proposed schedular exemption would allow the licensee to continue to operate the plant from January 2, 1993, until February 19, 1993, when the 39 Type C tests would be performed during RFO-12 in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J. The remaining Type B penetrations



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and Type C tested valves are within the 24-month frequency or are scheduled for testing prior to RFO-12. The penetrations included in the licensee's schedular exemption request represent approximately 45 percent of the Type C penetrations at Nine Mile Point Unit 1, but only 6.2 percent of the total "as-left" leakage at the beginning of the current operating cycle. The total "as-left" leakage for all Types B and C penetrations was 0.24 La and the total "as-left" leakage from the penetrations covered by the proposed exemption was 0.015 La. The combined leakage from the penetrations addressed in the exemption went from an "as-left" value to 0.016 La to an "as-found" value of 0.05 La during the 2-year interval prior to the current operating cycle. During the 2-year interval prior to that, the combined leakage from these penetrations went from an "as-left" value of 0.0224 La to an "as-found" value of 0.095 La. Based on the most recent "as-left" leakage of 0.015 La, the historical performance of these penetrations, and a maximum increase of 7 percent in the surveillance interval, the licensee has determined that the maximum combined leakage from these penetrations would not be expected to exceed 0.1 La. This provides reasonable assurance that the requested surveillance interval extension will not result in the Types B and C leakage rate total exceeding the 0.6 La limit of 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix J. Therefore, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed schedular exemption.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed schedular exemption only involves LLRTs on containment isolation valves. The exemption does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Therefore, the Commission concludes that



there are no significant nonradiological impacts associated with the proposed schedular exemption.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action:

Since the Commission has concluded that these are no significant environmental effects that would result from the proposed schedular exemption, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impacts need not be evaluated. The principal alternative would be to deny the licensee's exemption request. Such action would not reduce environmental impacts of the Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station Unit No. 1 and would result in an unwarranted shutdown of the plant.

Alternative Use of Resources:

The actions associated with the granting of the proposed schedular 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 schedular 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 schedular 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.



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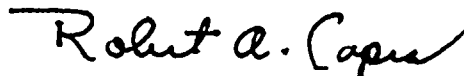
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For further details with respect to this action, see the licensee's application for the schedular exemption dated November 3, 1992, which superseded the licensee's application dated October 14, 1992. This document is available for public inspection at the Commissions's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, D.C. and at the Penfield Library, State University of New York, Oswego, New York 13126.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of November 1992.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION.



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



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