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 SYLVIA, B.R. Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.

SUBJECT: Forwards SALP repts 50-220/97-99 & 50-410/97-99 for Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, Units 1 & 2 for period 960602-971108. Mgt meeting scheduled for 980109 at Nine Mile Point site to discuss assessment & address weaknesses identified.

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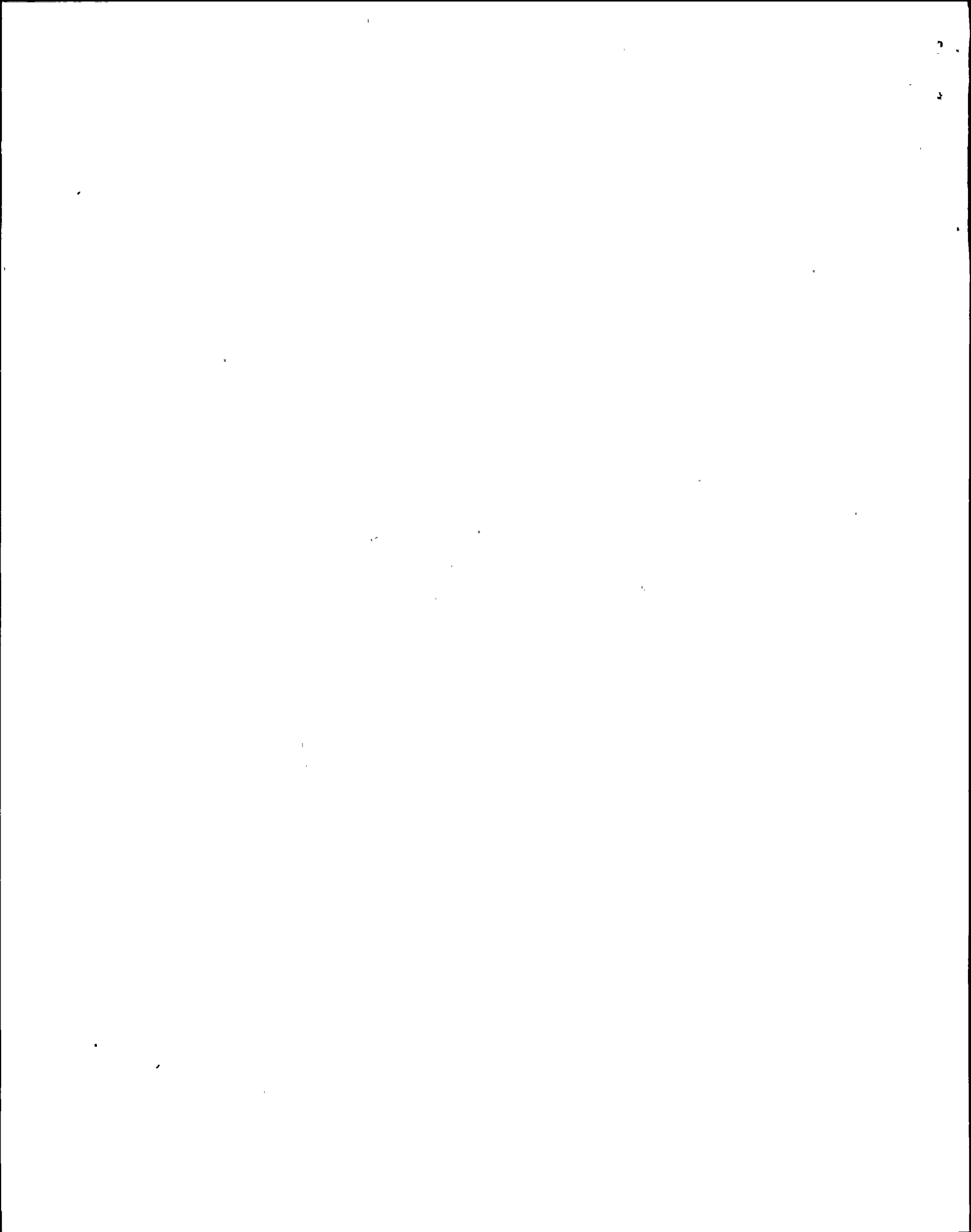
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December 30, 1997

Mr. B. Ralph Sylvia
Executive Vice President
and Chief Nuclear Officer
Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation
Nuclear Learning Center
450 Lake Road
Oswego, NY 13126

**SUBJECT: SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF LICENSEE PERFORMANCE (SALP) REPORT
NOS. 50-220/97-99 AND 50-410/97-99 FOR NINE MILE POINT NUCLEAR
STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2**

Dear Mr. Sylvia:

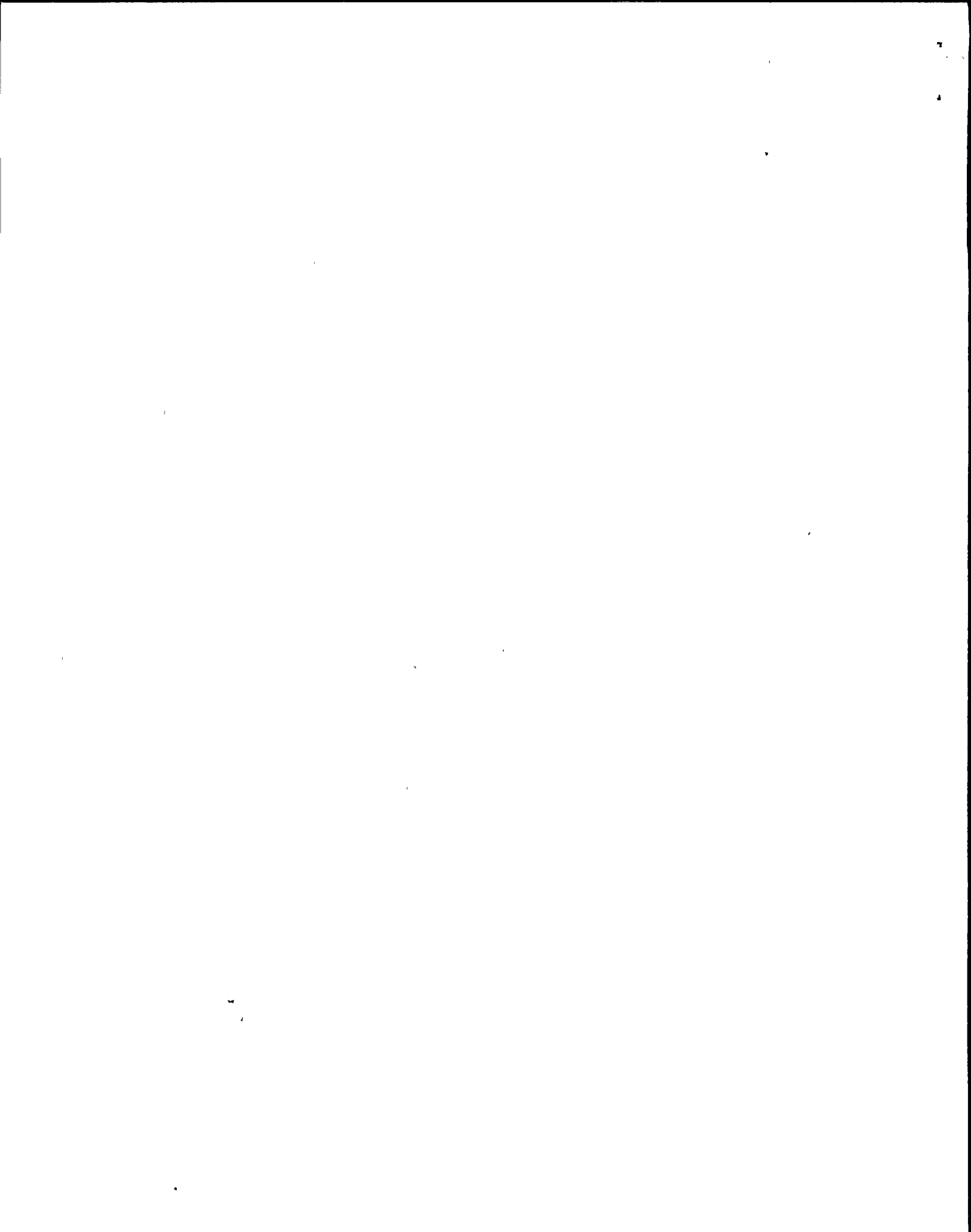
This letter forwards the SALP report for Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, Units No. 1 and 2, for the period June 2, 1996, through November 8, 1997 (Enclosure 1). This assessment was conducted using the SALP process that was implemented by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on July 19, 1993. In this process, the NRC staff evaluates the performance of licensees in four functional areas: Operations, Engineering, Maintenance, and Plant Support. The Plant Support area is composed of radiological and effluent controls, chemistry, security, emergency preparedness, fire protection, and housekeeping.

Performance of the Nine Mile Point Station during this period was generally good; however, continued management attention is needed to address issues in several areas. The Unit 1 plant trip and reactor vessel overfill event revealed weaknesses in the management oversight of operations and engineering support activities. Lapses in management oversight also resulted in weak performance in other areas such as maintenance rule program development, and implementation of the radioactive waste and transportation program. Personnel performance errors occurred in all functional areas. Although the threshold for identifying problems was appropriately low, on many occasions the root cause analyses and corrective actions were weak. While initiatives were taken and improvements were made in some of these areas, there was a lack of consistent performance and improvement.

Performance in the operations area declined to a Category 2 rating. Operators generally performed well during plant startups and shutdowns, and in response to events. Conservative decision making was evident in the operation of both units. However, personnel performance errors were noted throughout the period. Also, several weaknesses were identified with the licensed operator initial and requalification training programs.

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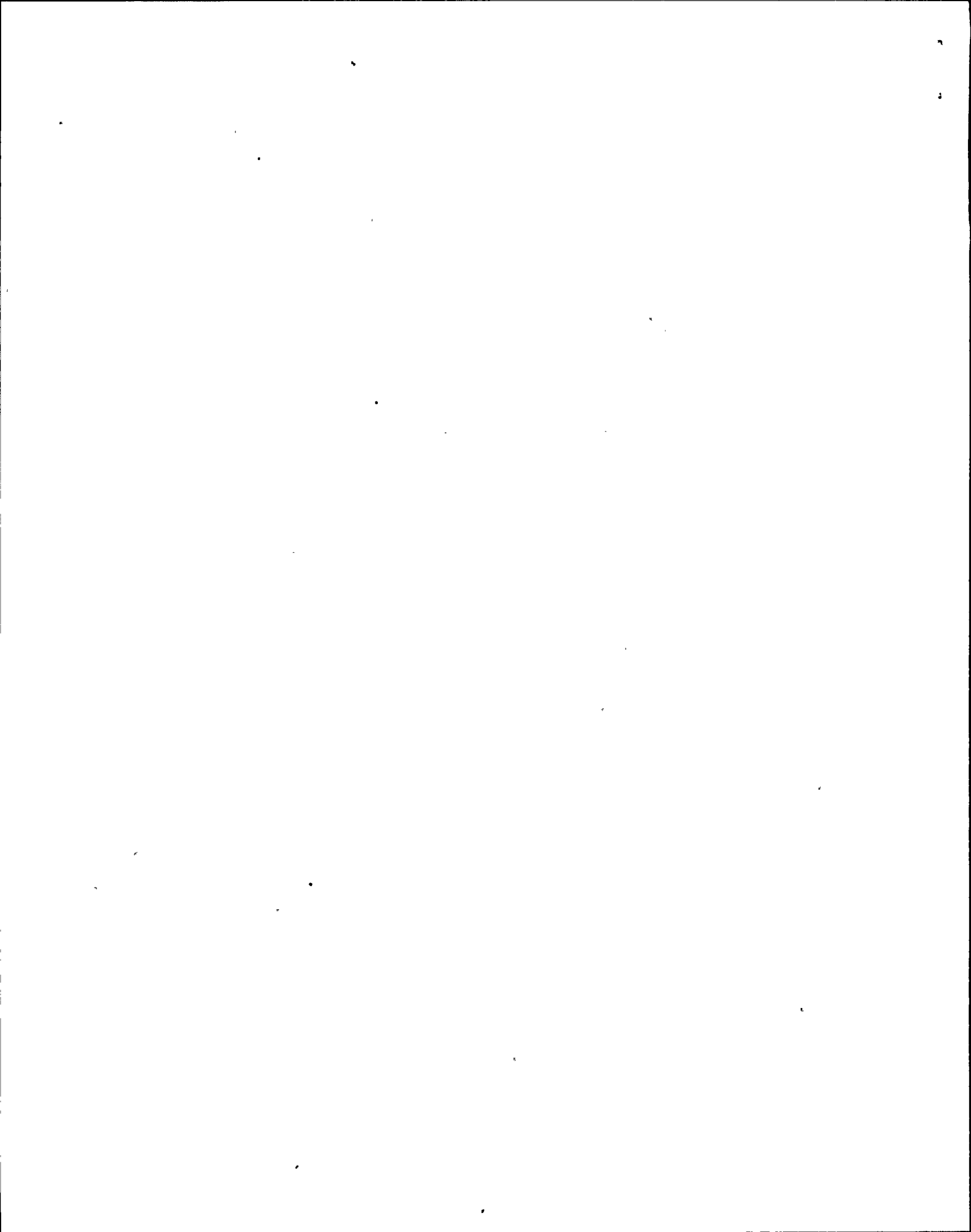


Performance in the maintenance area was rated Category 2. Management involvement and oversight in the planning and performance of maintenance activities, particularly during outages, were evident. Routine maintenance and surveillance activities were generally well planned, coordinated, and executed. Significant corrective maintenance in response to emergent issues was also performed well. Personnel performance errors occurred throughout the period; however, the frequency and consequence of the errors decreased in the latter half of the period. Several deficiencies with the technical adequacy of surveillance procedures, and with the scheduling of some tests, were noted throughout the period. Also, the Unit 1 maintenance rule program was poorly developed.

Performance in the engineering area was rated Category 3. Early in the period, management oversight provided to some important engineering activities was ineffective and the quality of engineering work varied significantly. To address those issues, management, organizational and program changes were made. Later in the period, some improvements were noted in engineering activities. For example, improvements made to the motor-operated valve testing program were sufficient to permit closure of Generic Letter 89-10. Also, some significant technical problems were identified and addressed through engineering activities such as the Unit 1 core shroud inspection and repair program. However, throughout the period, a number of equipment problems challenged the operating organization, some of which resulted in the need for unit shutdowns. Also, staff attrition and turnover, particularly in the system engineering and environmental qualification groups, presented a continuing management challenge.

Performance in the area of plant support area was rated Category 2. The radiological protection program was effectively implemented with radiological exposures maintained as low as reasonably achievable, while radiological effluents, environmental monitoring, and chemistry programs remained strong. Also, performance in the emergency preparedness, security and fire protection areas was good. However, problems were noted in the radiological waste handling and transportation area.

We have scheduled a management meeting with you at noon on January 9, 1998, at the Nine Mile Point site. The meeting is open to the public. At the meeting, you should be prepared to discuss our assessment and any initiatives you have ongoing or plan to take to address the weaknesses detailed in our assessment.



Enclosure 2 provides the schedule of NRC inspections of your facility planned for the next year. We will inform you of any changes. The routine resident inspection effort is not included in this schedule. We appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Hubert J. Miller
Regional Administrator

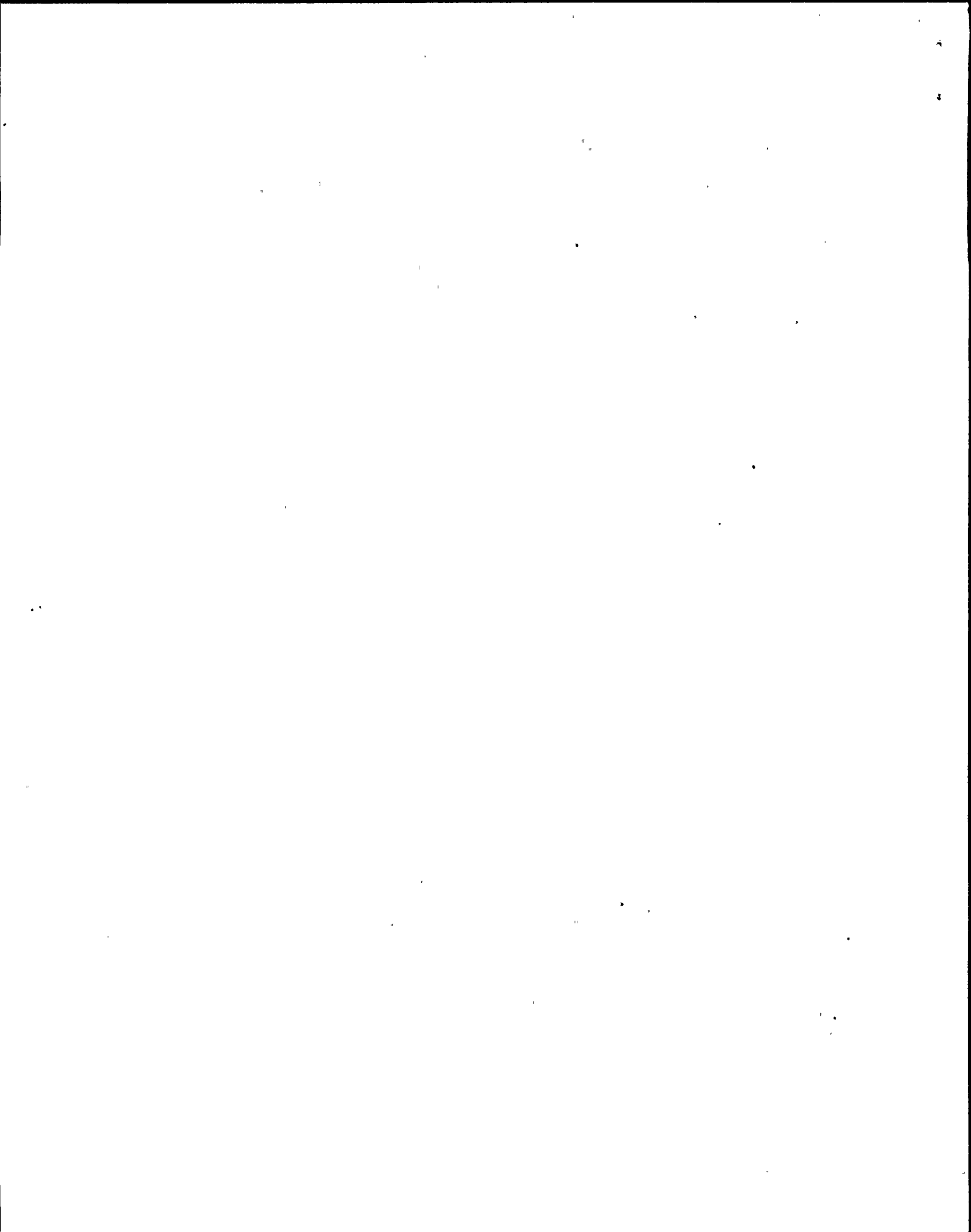
Docket Nos. 50-220
50-410

Enclosures:

1. SALP Report Nos. 50-220/97-99 and 50-410/97-99
2. Inspection Plan for Nine Mile Point Units 1 and 2

cc w/enclosures:

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C. Terry, Vice President- Safety Assessment and Support
J. Conway, Vice President - Nuclear Engineering
K. Dahlberg, Vice President - Nuclear Operations
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B. Ralph Sylvia

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