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SUBJECT: Provides power uprate power ascension test program interim startup rept. During testing unit 2 was unable to attain 105% of rate core flow. Refueling outage 7 is tentatively scheduled to begin Mar/Apr 2000.

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Niagara Mohawk

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July 13, 1998
NMP2L 1805

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

RE: Nine Mile Point Unit 2
Docket No. 50-410
NPF-69

Subject: *Nine Mile Point Unit 2 Power Uprate Power Ascension Test Program - Interim Report*

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to Nine Mile Point Unit 2 (NMP2) Technical Specifications Sections 6.9.1.1, 6.9.1.2, and 6.9.1.3, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NMPC) is providing this letter in regard to the NMP2 "Power Uprate Power Ascension Test Program Interim Startup Report." The interim report was submitted by NMPC in a letter dated November 28, 1995 (NMP2L 1597). Subsequent interim reports were submitted by letters dated February 23, 1996 (NMP2L 1610), May 20, 1996 (NMP2L 1631), August 16, 1996 (NMP2L 1654), November 14, 1996 (NMP2L 1673), February 11, 1997 (NMP2L 1687), May 9, 1997 (NMP2L 1705), August 5, 1997 (NMP2L 1720), October 27, 1997 (NMP2L 1734), January 19, 1998 (NMP2L 1748) and April 14, 1998 (NMP2L 1770).

In NMPC's previous interim report submittals, NMPC stated that the power uprate power ascension test program could not be completed due to the inability to achieve 105% of rated core flow at 100% of uprated power level. During continuing power uprate testing, NMP2 was unable to attain 105% of rated core flow at the NMP2 maximum drive flow limit of 45,000 gpm.

Results of power ascension testing just completed for Refueling Outage 6 (RFO6) have identified a further decrease in ability to achieve 105% of rated core flow. During RFO6, NMPC identified a minor leakage source into the NMP2 core shroud originating from several jet pump pairs. However, the leakage has been evaluated by GE Nuclear Energy and found to result in an insignificant core flow decrease of approximately 0.18%. As stated in NMPC's August 5, 1997 interim report, NMPC believes the inability to achieve 105% of rated core flow may be attributed to jet pump fouling. NMPC is currently evaluating the results of the latest testing and will provide a further update in its next interim report.

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The jet pump fouling phenomenon has affected other nuclear facilities, and several options may be available to correct or mitigate the effects. NMPC is still evaluating the viability of cleaning the NMP2 jet pumps to verify the cause of the inability to reach 105% of rated core flow. However, due to the planning required to arrange jet pump cleaning, NMP2 will not be able to complete the evolution until RFO7 at the earliest. RFO7 is tentatively scheduled to begin March/April 2000.

The inability to achieve 105% of rated core flow does not adversely affect the continued safe operation of NMP2. However, submittal of supplementary reports is required per Technical Specification 6.9.1.3 due to the temporary inability to achieve 105% of rated core flow in order to complete the remaining tests.

NMPC will continue to submit the supplementary reports required by NMP2 Technical Specification 6.9.1.3 every three months until the remaining testing described in our revised interim report has been completed. A final startup report will be submitted within 90 days following completion of the remaining power uprate tests.

Very truly yours,



Richard B. Abbott
Vice President - Nuclear Engineering

RBA/KLL/sc

xc: Mr. H. J. Miller, NRC Regional Administrator
Mr. S. S. Bajwa, Director, Project Directorate I-1, NRR
Mr. B. S. Norris, Senior Resident Inspector
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