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November 13, 1998

Mr. John H. Mueller
Chief Nuclear Officer
Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation
Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station
Operations Building, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 63
Lycoming, NY 13093

SUBJECT: NINE MILE POINT UNIT 2 CIRCUIT BREAKER INSPECTION REPORT
NO. 50-410/98-18

Dear Mr. Mueller:

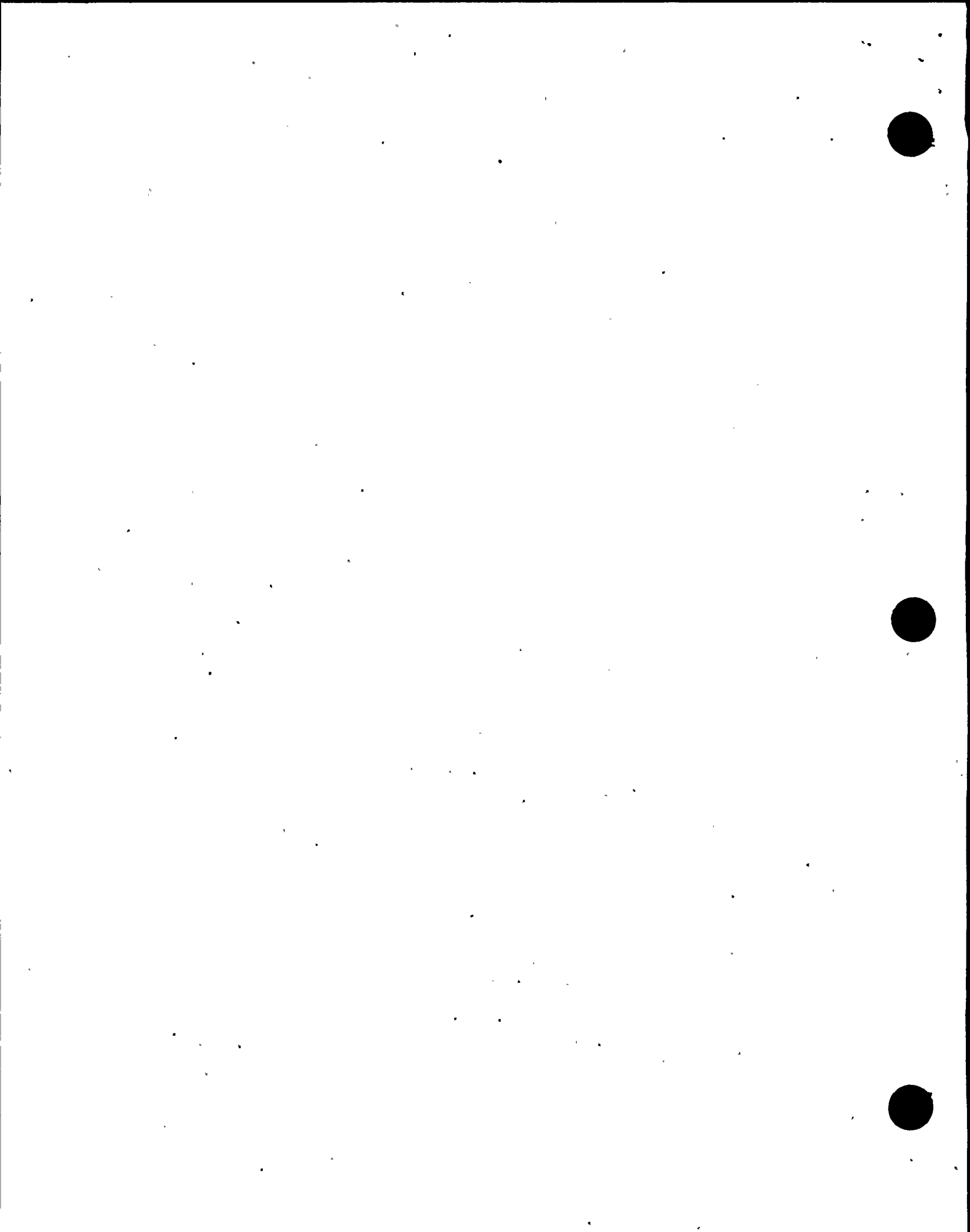
This letter refers to a circuit breaker team inspection conducted from September 21 - 25, 1998 at Nine Mile Point Unit 2. The purpose of the inspection was to determine whether activities authorized by the license were conducted safely, and in accordance with NRC requirements. At the conclusion of the on-site inspection on September 25, 1998, the findings were discussed with members of your staff. Additional findings from information provided by your staff subsequent to the on-site inspection were discussed with Mr. G. Gresock on October 14, 1998.

The inspection was directed toward areas important to public health and safety. The areas examined during this inspection included your medium-voltage and low-voltage circuit breaker maintenance program, maintenance procedures, voltage calculations, operating experience review, vendor manual and interface programs, circuit breaker testing, and self-assessment audits. Within these areas, the inspection consisted of selective examinations of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, and observation of activities in progress.

Although the overall breaker maintenance program was acceptable, the team determined that there were several areas of weakness in the program. These areas were identified by your staff during recent self-assessment audits, including the vendor interface program for breaker maintenance, the controls of breaker vendor manuals, the "periodic re-contact" of breaker vendors, and the operating experience review program. The self-assessment audits reflected good identification of problem areas.

The NRC team identified additional examples which confirmed weaknesses in those areas. Of particular concern is the area of operating experience review. Some reviews were found to contain incorrect conclusions due to incomplete database searches and personnel not familiar with plant equipment; others were narrowly focused and did not consider generic applicability. Weak operating experience reviews resulted in missed opportunities to prevent breaker failures in the past.

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PDR ADDCK 05000410
G PDR



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Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
LARRY E. NICHOLSON FOR:

James T. Wiggins, Director
Division of Reactor Safety

Docket Nos. 50-410

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