

50-220



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 7, 1999

Mr. John H. Mueller  
Chief Nuclear Officer  
Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation  
Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station  
Operations Building, Second Floor  
Lycoming, NY 13093

SUBJECT: ALTERNATIVES FOR EXAMINATION OF REACTOR PRESSURE VESSEL  
SHELL WELDS, NINE MILE POINT NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1 (TAC NO.  
MA4383)

Dear Mr. Mueller:

By letter dated December 10, 1998, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NMPC) requested permanent relief from the inservice inspection requirements of 10 CFR 50.55a(g) for the volumetric examination of circumferential reactor pressure vessel (RPV) welds in response to NRC Generic Letter 98-05, "Boiling Water Reactor Licensees Use of the BWRVIP-05 Report to Request Relief From Augmented Examination Requirements on Reactor Pressure Vessel Circumferential Shell Welds." NMPC's proposal to inspect only the longitudinal shell welds represents a request for a permanent alternative to the augmented inspection of RPV shell welds specified in 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6)(ii)(A)(2).

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NMPC also requested approval of an alternative to the examination requirements of 10 CFR 50.55a(g) for the volumetric examination of longitudinal RPV shell welds and the shell-to-flange weld. NMPC has proposed to perform an automated inspection of certain RPV welds using personnel and procedures qualified to the "Performance Demonstration Initiative." The automated examination will be performed using the General Electric Remote Inspection System-2000.

The NRC staff has reviewed the requested alternatives. The enclosure is our safety evaluation (SE) which concludes that NMPC has provided information that demonstrates it cannot satisfy the augmented inspection requirements and has proposed alternatives that provide an acceptable level of quality and safety. Therefore, the proposed alternative to the augmented RPV shell weld an examination requirement of 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6)(ii)(A)(5) is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) and is effective from the date of the SE until the expiration of the operating license (August 22, 2009). Further, the alternative to the examination requirement of 10 CFR 50.55a(g)(6)(ii)(A)(5) for the volumetric examination of longitudinal RPV shell welds and the shell-to-flange weld is authorized pursuant to 10 CFR 50.55a(a)(3)(i) and is effective from the date of the SE until the expiration of the operating license (August 22, 2009).

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April 7, 1999

J. Mueller

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If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Darl Hood by phone on (301) 415-3049 or by electronic mail at dsh@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:

S. Singh Bajwa, Chief, Section 1  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-220

Enclosure: Safety Evaluation

cc w/encl: See next page

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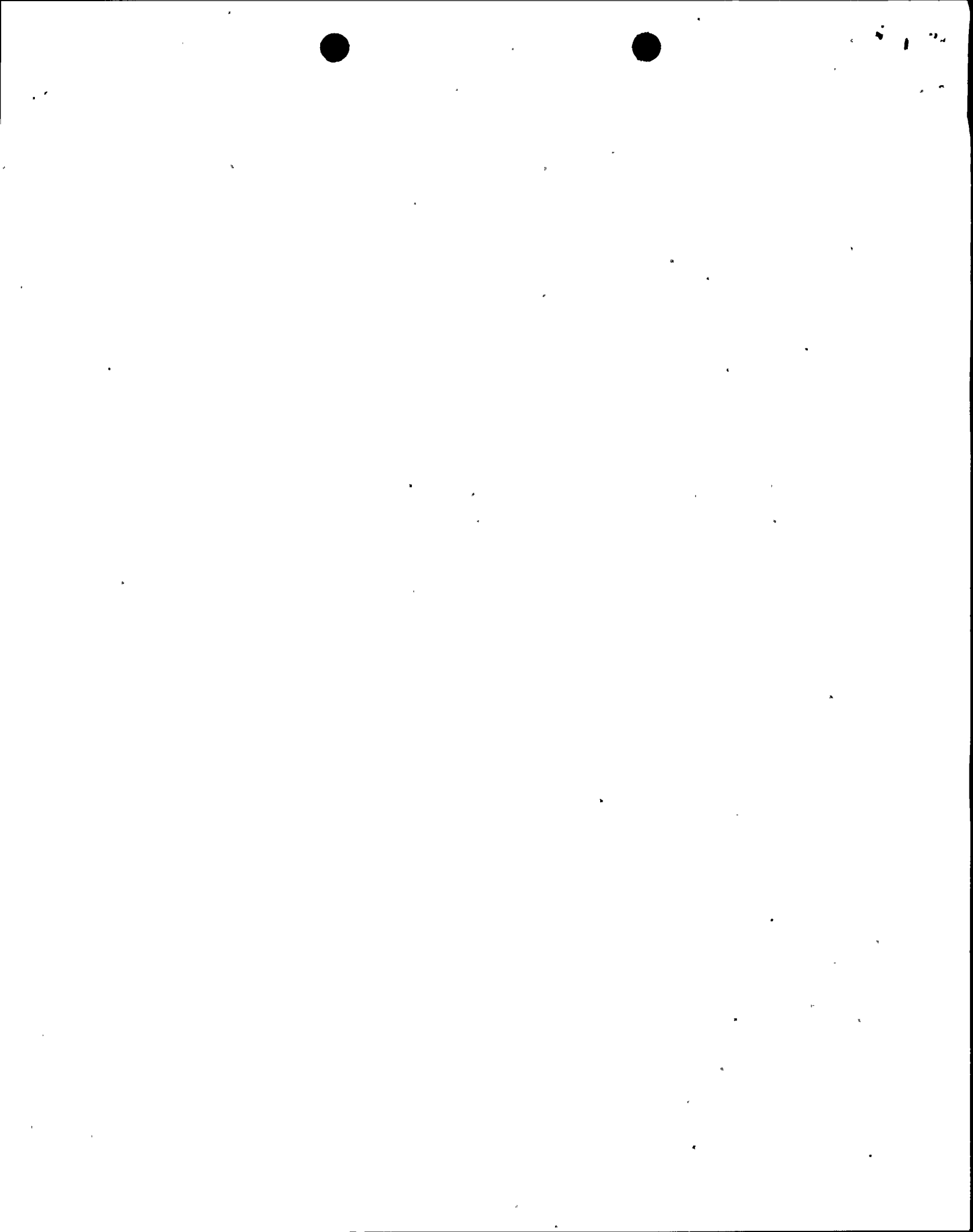
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Sincerely,

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If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Darl Hood by phone on (301) 415-3049 or by electronic mail at dsh@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "S. Singh Bajwa", written over a horizontal line.

S. Singh Bajwa, Chief, Section.1  
Project Directorate I  
Division of Licensing Project Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-220

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cc w/encl: See next page





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