

April 20, 1999

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: NRC 40500 TEAM INSPECTION 50-220; 50-410/99-02
(CORRECTIVE ACTION PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS)**

Dear Mr. Mueller:

This letter transmits the results of the NRC team inspection conducted at Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation's Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station. The purpose of the inspection was to review the effectiveness of the corrective action program. The inspection was completed on March 12, 1999, and the inspection results were verbally communicated to your staff at an exit meeting held at the station that day.

The inspection was performed onsite during the period February 22-26 and March 8-12, 1999, using NRC Inspection Procedure 40500, "Effectiveness of Licensee Controls in Identifying, Resolving, and Preventing Problems." Overall, NMPC's program for identifying, resolving and preventing problems has improved and is considered acceptable. However, corrective actions have not, in some cases been fully effective as discussed below.

The team concluded that NMPC has an overall good problem identification process with a low threshold for identifying issues and high volume input. No significant deficiencies were identified that had not already been self-identified and included in the station's deviation/event reporting (DER) program. The timeliness of DER dispositions has improved since our previous assessment and root cause evaluations and corrective action development and implementation were generally effective. However, some recurrent problems continue to be identified necessitating issuance of additional DERs for matters such as administrative deficiencies or instances of ineffective corrective actions for problems in lower safety category DERs. Tracking and trending of findings in the corrective action program, including evaluation of adverse trends has improved through implementation of numerous management initiatives including changes to the NMPC Business and Tactical Plans. The effectiveness of these initiatives has yet to be demonstrated and will be reviewed during future inspections.

NMPC utilized operating experience (OE) and industry information as an integral part of its corrective action program. The information was evaluated for applicability and corrective measures were taken. However, some examples were identified where older OE items and some recent isolated OE items had not been properly reviewed for applicability and assigned for disposition.

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Improvement was noted in the self-assessment process and your quality assurance audits were considered very effective in identifying problems for incorporation into your corrective action program. Your independent oversight and safety committees were active and involved with the day-to-day operation of the station. Safety systems reviewed exhibited good material condition. No system hardware discrepancies or operating concerns were noted that were not previously identified by NMPC.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC has determined that four violations of NRC requirements occurred. These violations are being treated as Non-Cited Violations (NCVs), consistent with Appendix C of the Enforcement Policy. The NCVs are described in the subject inspection report. If you contest the violations or their severity level, you should provide a response within 30 days of the date of this inspection report, with the basis for your denial, to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Document Control Desk, Washington DC 20555-0001, with copies to the Regional Administrator, Region I, and the Director, Office of Enforcement, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR).

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Wayne D. Lanning, Director
Division of Reactor Safety

Docket Nos. 50-220, 50-410
License Nos. DPR-63, NPF-69

Enclosure: NRC Combined Inspection Report No. 50-220;50-410/99-02

cc w/encl:

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