



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

May 1, 1997

The Honorable John M. McHugh
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-3224

Dear Congressman McHugh:

I am responding to your letter of April 10, 1997, in which you expressed the concerns of several Oswego County residents, including a county legislator, regarding vertical cracks in the welds of the core shroud at Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation's Nine Mile Point Unit 1 reactor in Scriba, New York. The Commission recognizes that safety of the core shroud is important to the people of the Oswego area. On April 8, 1997, the licensee submitted to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) its inspection findings and evaluation of the core shroud issue. The licensee presented this information for discussion at the meeting on April 14, 1997, with the NRC and the public at the Joint News Center in Fulton, New York. I assure you that the NRC is conducting a very careful independent review of the licensee's April 8 submittal to determine whether or not the shroud is acceptable for continued use at Nine Mile Point Unit 1.

The NRC staff is reviewing the licensee's evaluation and root cause determination regarding the observed degradation of the core shroud (e.g., the cracks found in the vertical welds) and the tie rods of Nine Mile Point Unit 1. It is Niagara Mohawk's responsibility as a licensee to demonstrate to the NRC staff that the existing shroud and the repaired tie rods meet the requirements set forth in NRC regulations (which endorse the code and standards of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers) to ensure safe operation of the shroud. After completing its technical review, the NRC staff will issue a safety evaluation report to the licensee that accepts or rejects the licensee's conclusions regarding the safe operation of the plant with the current shroud. The staff will inform you of its technical review and send you a copy of this report. This report also will be made available to the public through the local public document room in the Oswego area.

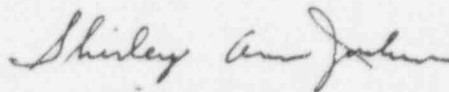
With regard to your concern about the absence of an independent technical review, Niagara Mohawk has engaged several consultants and vendors in performing the appropriate analyses of the current condition of the shroud and its safety for continued operation. These consultants include the General Electric Company, which designed the shroud when the plant was constructed; Structural Integrity Associates; MPM Technologies; and the Altran Corporation. In addition, the NRC staff is conducting an engineering review of the licensee's evaluations (which include their consultants' analyses) to ensure that the design bases for the shroud are met. Furthermore, the NRC technical staff is following this issue closely and is assessing the shroud tie rod



repairs performed by the licensee. You can be assured that the plant will not restart until the NRC is satisfied that there will be no undue risk to the health and safety of the public in the Oswego area.

I am enclosing a copy of a paper prepared by the NRC staff that gives information related to shroud activities nationwide. I trust that you will find this information useful. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Shirley Ann Jackson".

Shirley Ann Jackson

Enclosure: As stated