

TAC# MA 3740



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

October 20, 1998

Ms. Linda DeStefano
5031 Onondaga Road
Syracuse, NY 13215-1403

Dear Ms. DeStefano:

Your letter to me and others, dated September 16, 1998, expressed concern about the safety record at the Nine Mile Point Unit 1 (NMP1) nuclear power plant and requested that the NRC perform a thorough safety evaluation and systems' readiness review of NMP1. You requested that, until such action was completed, the NRC shut down NMP1.

The NRC strives to maintain a thorough regulatory oversight of the operations at NMP1 through specialist inspectors based out of the Region I office, located in King of Prussia, PA, and through the NRC resident inspectors stationed full-time at the Nine Mile Point facility. Engineers and managers at NRC Headquarters in Rockville, MD, who are qualified over a wide range of technical disciplines, also participate in and provide support for the NRC's inspection and regulatory oversight activities. Although we believe our licensing and inspection processes are comprehensive, our inspection and verification resources have limitations and provide only a sampling of the multitude of regulated activities performed by the licensee. The burden of full regulatory compliance rests in the hands of the owners and operators of the nuclear facilities we license. Thus, we welcome public observations and comment on licensee performance and appreciate your letter as another source of input for our continuing plant inspections and assessment.

Based upon our oversight, the NRC's current assessment is that the safety performance of NMP1 is acceptable, and not significantly different from that of other operating nuclear power plants. Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NMPC) is required to follow a rigid quality assurance/quality control program at its facilities to ensure their continued safe operation. Whenever problems are encountered, this program obligates NMPC to take comprehensive corrective actions not only to fix the problem, but to prevent a recurrence. As such, the present material condition at NMP1 meets the regulations and the applicable industry codes and standards as endorsed and/or approved by the NRC.

Accordingly, shutting down NMP1 and performing systems' readiness evaluations and further safety analyses does not appear warranted at this time. However, you may be assured that if the safety record of NMP1, or any other nuclear plant, became unacceptable, the NRC would not hesitate to take appropriate actions, including, if necessary, shutting the plant down to ensure public health and safety.

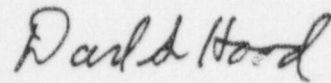
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Ms. L. DeStefano

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Thank you for sharing with us your concern for the continued safe operation of NMP1. I trust this reply has been responsive to that concern.

Sincerely,



Darl S. Hood, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Ms. L. DeStefano

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October 20, 1998

Thank you for sharing with us your concern for the continued safe operation of NMP1. I trust this reply has been responsive to that concern.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Darl S. Hood, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate I-1
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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