

November 9, 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 ENGINEERING TEAM INSPECTION 50-220/99-08; 50-410/99-08

Dear Mr. Mueller:

This letter transmits the results of the NRC team inspection conducted at Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation's (NMPC) Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station during the period August 30 - September 3 and September 13-17, 1999. The purpose of the inspection was to review the effectiveness of the engineering organization in supporting safe plant operation. The inspection also included a review of the 10 CFR 50.59 safety evaluation program. The inspection was completed on September 17, 1999, and the preliminary findings were discussed with Mr. R. Abbott, Vice President of Nuclear Engineering, and other members of your staff on that date and in a subsequent telephone conversation on October 26, 1999.

Overall, we determined the performance of NMPC engineering was acceptable and the technical quality of issues reviewed was generally good. However, the inspection team identified a number of deficiencies that were not previously identified and/or properly resolved by your staff. The nature of these issues indicate a lack of consistency in the implementation of station programs and procedures. As a result, the methods with which issues were addressed were not always appropriate and the resolutions for several issues were not comprehensive or timely. Additional attention to the implementation of station program and procedure requirements by engineering and other involved departments appears to be necessary to improve performance.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC has determined that four Severity Level IV violations of NRC requirements occurred. One violation involved the failure to implement the requirements of the temporary modification procedures when installing a temporary power supply in Unit 1 and a failure to implement the corrective action procedure requirements when evaluating a non-conforming condition associated with a Unit 1 nuclear instrumentation system switch. A second violation identified a failure to implement adequate corrective actions for the control of missiles that could affect the Unit 1 emergency diesel generators and inadequate actions associated with the control of lubricants used with Unit 1 safety-related equipment. A third violation included two examples where design control measures were not adequate when approving the installation of permanent strainers in the suction of the spent fuel pool cooling pumps and when operating the Unit 1 service water system different than originally designed. Finally, in-service testing was not adequate for several Unit 2 safety-related valves.

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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; the Director, Office of Enforcement, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; and the Senior Resident Inspector at the Nine Mile Point facility.

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,

Lawrence T. Doerflein, Chief
Engineering Programs Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

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

Enclosure: NRC Combined Inspection Report No. 50-220/99-08;50-410/99-08

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cc w/encl:

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