

December 8, 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 INTEGRATED INSPECTION REPORT NOS. 50-220/99-09  
AND 50-410/99-09**

Dear Mr. Mueller:

This report transmits the findings of safety inspections conducted by NRC inspectors at the Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2, from September 12 to October 30, 1999. At the conclusion of the inspection, the findings were discussed with members of your staff.

Overall, the conduct of operations at the Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station reflected an acceptable safety focus. However, during an October 16 startup, several performance deficiencies associated with reactivity management at Unit 1 were identified. These deficiencies identify the need for continued rigor and focus on conservative decision making during the conduct of operations. In addition, we have noted an increased occurrence of configuration control issues at both units due to either inadequate protective tagging of equipment or component (valves, switches, or breakers) positioning errors.

In the area of plant support, we found your performance mixed with regard to control of high dose rate work. The thorough planning and effective implementation of radiological controls for a Unit 1 spent fuel pool re-rack job was contrasted by some fundamental weaknesses in the control of Unit 2 spent resin disposal activities which resulted in an individual receiving a higher than anticipated exposure. However, your staff recognized the significance of the deficiencies, conducted a detailed and accurate root cause evaluation, and implemented comprehensive and thorough corrective and preventive actions. Also in the area of plant support, we found that you continued to implement effective Radiological Environmental Monitoring and Meteorological Monitoring Programs.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC has determined that four Severity Level IV violations of NRC requirements occurred. The violations are being treated as Non-Cited Violations (NCVs), consistent with Section VII.B.1.a of the Enforcement Policy. The NCVs are described in the subject inspection report and involve the failure to properly implement protective tags, the failure to perform required intermediate range neutron monitoring testing, improper leak rate testing of the automatic depressurization system nitrogen supply system, and the failure to follow radiation protection requirements. If you contest these violations or severity level of the NCVs, you should provide a response within 30 days of the date of this inspection

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report, with 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, and the NRC Resident Inspector at the Nine Mile Point facility.

In accordance with 10CFR2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

Michele G. Evans, Chief  
Projects Branch 1  
Division of Reactor Projects

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

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report Nos. 50-220/99-09 and 50-410/99-09

Docket Nos. 50-220  
50-410

cc w/encl:

G. Wilson, Esquire

M. Wetterhahn, Winston and Strawn

J. Rettberg, New York State Electric and Gas Corporation

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J. Vinqvist, MATS, Inc.

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J. Spath, Program Director, New York State Energy Research  
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