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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST
NIAGARA MOHAWK POWER CORPORATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has cited the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation for four alleged violations of NRC requirements at the Nine Mile Point 1 Nuclear Station in Scriba, New York. The staff has proposed a fine of \$50,000 for two of the violations.

The alleged violations were identified during an NRC inspection conducted between February 17 and March 11. One of the violations for which the fine is being proposed concerns a safety vulnerability of the Unit 1 reactor and turbine building blowout panels. These metal panels, located near the top of the turbine and reactor buildings, are designed to relieve excess pressure under some accident conditions. However, based on the results of the NRC inspection it appears the panels would not have functioned as designed from the time the plant began operating in December 1969 through March 1995.

Niagara Mohawk was also cited and fined for its failure, in October 1993, to perform a proper safety evaluation when it determined that the wrong size bolts had been installed on the panels, preventing the panels from functioning as designed. In a letter to the licensee, NRC Region I Administrator Thomas T. Martin said, "The NRC is particularly concerned that a weak safety assessment, coupled with design control deficiencies involving a calculation error and inadequate design review of that calculation led to an untimely resolution of the problem identified in October 1993." The problem has since been corrected.

The two violations for which the licensee was cited, but not fined, involve the failure to write a deviation event report to address human performance and personnel performance problems adverse to quality, and failure in October 1993, to notify the NRC within an hour of a condition outside the plant's design basis.

Niagara Mohawk has 30 days to either pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that part or all of it be withdrawn.

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