

REPORT OF INTERVIEW  
WITH  
JOHN LATIMER

During the evening of October 27, 1993, John LATIMER was telephonically interviewed by U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Office of Investigations (OI), Region II, Senior Investigator James D. Dockery regarding LATIMER's alleged wrongful discharge from the H. B. Robinson Nuclear Plant. During this preliminary interview LATIMER provided the following information.

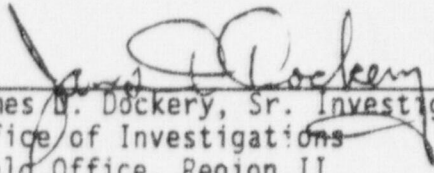
LATIMER was employed by the Carolina Power and Light Company (CP&L) for approximately 9 1/2 years prior to being discharged in November 1992. At the time of his dismissal by CP&L, LATIMER was a project welding engineer and erosion/corrosion specialist at the H. B. Robinson plant. During the last 6 months of his employment, LATIMER frequently voiced concerns to his supervision and management regarding the lack of commitment by management to the facility's erosion/corrosion control program. Primarily, LATIMER was dissatisfied with the manpower available to address what he considered fundamental flaws in the system design and inadequate maintenance. According to LATIMER, his work group was severely "undermanned," a complaint he brought to his supervisor and, eventually, to the NRC. His complaints to the NRC were the basis for an inspection of the erosion/corrosion control program which LATIMER claims substantiated his concerns that the program was inadequate. His employment was subsequently terminated, allegedly for unsatisfactory job performance. However, LATIMER claims his discharge was actually retaliation by CP&L. The charge by CP&L that his performance was inadequate was not substantiated by performance evaluations he received prior to voicing his concerns to management and the NRC.

According to LATIMER he did not file a complaint regarding his discharge with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) because he was not aware that he had this option until May or June of 1993 when he contacted the NRC and was advised of his rights under Section 211 of the Energy Reorganization Act. By that time more than six months had elapsed since his termination and his complaint was time-barred under the law. LATIMER also stated that, at the time he was discharged, he thought that DOL protection was only available to "blue collar workers," not to "white collar" employees like himself. Furthermore, LATIMER claimed that he had no desire to be reinstated as a CP&L employee, was not interested in financial compensation, and is not sure he would have filed a complaint with DOL after his discharge even if he had been aware of that option. According to LATIMER, "I don't have to work," implying that personal income is not a problem. LATIMER corresponded with the NRC during May 1993 merely to document the circumstances of his discharge in relation to what he alleges to be significant technical deficiencies at the H. B. Robinson plant.

Investigator Dockery explained to LATIMER that the NRC had no authority to provide any personal remedy for perceived wrongs perpetrated by CP&L and that the NRC's interest in the matter was to assure that CP&L operated within regulatory requirements. LATIMER said that he understood this, reiterated that he was not seeking any personal remedy, and stated that he knew he could take civil action against CP&L under state law. However, he professed no interest in that course of action.

LATIMER advised that during the past two months he had provided Region II Allegation Coordinator O. DeMiranda with a "package" of documentation pertaining to his technical concerns and discharge. The information also contained CP&L personnel records related to his job performance prior to his discharge which would support his claim that he was not considered a substandard performer until he brought his concerns to the NRC. Investigator Dockery informed LATIMER that he would obtain and review that information and, if necessary, arrange for further interview of LATIMER. LATIMER agreed to provide additional information as needed.

This Report of Interview was prepared on October 28, 1993.

  
James U. Dockery, Sr. Investigator  
Office of Investigations  
Field Office, Region II