Entergy

Entergy Operations, Inc.
River Bend Station
5485 U.S. Highway 61
P.O. Box 220
St. Francisville, LA 70775

March 15, 1999

Ellis Merschoff, Regional Administrator
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011

Subject: IA 8-004

Dear Mr. Merschoff,

The purpose of this letter is to respond to the Notice of Violation described in your correspondence to me dated January 5, 1999. The NRC has deliberated on this issue for over a year, and in the end reached what the NRC referred to as a close call. I am very disappointed in the NRC's determination that I deliberately provided incomplete and inaccurate information to the NRC's senior resident inspector during a meeting on October 15, 1997. I do not intend to revisit the facts here. However, I would like to say that neither the senior resident inspector nor I was certain as to the applicable RWP at the time, and the NRC RP inspector who witnessed the underlying event was not available to clarify the issue. In hindsight, I did not represent the Company or myself well because I was not adequately prepared for the meeting. But my intent was honest and my motives were sincere.

I also am disappointed that my dialogue with the NRC Staff was abruptly cut off by referral of the matter to the Office of Investigations. I approached the senior resident inspector several days after the October 15, 1997 meeting to follow-up on the issue but was told by the inspector that the matter was being handled by the Region. He would discuss the issue no further. I understand now that the investigative process precluded the senior resident inspector from discussing the issue. My attempt to continue the dialogue with the senior resident inspector reflected my understanding that the information discussed at the October 15 meeting was not the final word. I was sincerely trying to find the correct answer to the question that had been raised. I assumed that he had spoken to the NRC RP inspector in the meantime, who had clarified the situation. The NRC's instant suspicion of my conduct in that meeting and subsequent rush into the investigative process was precipitous and unfair, and precluded an opportunity to address this situation as the miscommunication it was, through further dialogue with the NRC inspectors.

The power of the Federal Government should be brought to bear on individual misconduct in the nuclear industry when serious public health and safety issues are at stake. But this was a simple meeting with an NRC employee, for which I was admittedly inadequately prepared, about a relatively low safety significant issue. I feel unfairly treated, and will never again be casual in my dealings with NRC inspectors. The price for an honest mistake has proven to be too high.

This ordeal has taken a heavy personal toll. The questioning of my integrity and the constant fear that my chosen career and my livelihood could be taken from me has affected my health and has been an emotional burden on my family. Further appeals would serve only to exacerbate both the effects on my family and the concerns of EOI and industry employees. I wish now to simply put this behind me and look to the future. For these reasons I will not pursue a formal appeal of this finding against me. But I am aware of and support EOI's request for reconsideration of these enforcement actions. They do not fairly reflect what happened and should be withdrawn.

Several years ago I wrote down the values that I am committed to. It was a valuable and enriching exercise. I now hold those words dear and use them as a compass: "Ask no more and give no less than courage, honesty, fairness, and respect." I am a man of integrity and will not waiver from my commitment to honesty. This experience has taught me how fragile a reputation for honesty and integrity can be. I have learned a valuable (if painful) lesson, and I have no intention of reliving it.

Sincerely,

A. Davey Wells
Superintendent, Radiation Control