

November 21, 2001

Dade W. Moeller, Ph.D.
147 River Island Road
New Bern, North Carolina 28562-3656

Dear Dr. Moeller:

I am responding to your letter of September 4, 2001, concerning your concerns and suggestions for effectively coping with challenges arising from the "Tooth Fairy Project." In your letter, you suggest an independent rebuttal of the health and safety issues raised by the Radiation and Public Health Project (RPHP), perhaps prepared by the National Academy of Sciences or the National Council on Radiological Protection and Measurements. Although we agree that the claims of the RPHP cannot withstand scientific scrutiny, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) does not see a need for further action at this time.

As you note, NRC staff has reviewed and prepared comments on the health and safety issues raised by Dr. Jay Gould et al. There are many studies that purport either adverse or beneficial health effects after exposure to very low doses of ionizing radiation. Thus, conducting an independent review of the specific issues raised by Gould et. al., as you suggest, may be unlikely to discourage new sets of unsupported claims by others. The NRC believes it is appropriate to continue to address individual claims of adverse health effects associated with nuclear power plant operations on a case-by-case basis. In my letter to you dated August 15, 2001, I provided a copy of the staff's comments on the "Tooth Fairy Project" in response to Jill Lipoti of the State of New Jersey. Similarly, NRC staff is currently addressing comments received at the July 17, 2001, public meeting on Turkey Point license renewal, including comments about the "Tooth Fairy Project," as part of the finalization of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Supplement 5, regarding Turkey Point Units 3 and 4 (SEIS). While the staff's discussion in the SEIS will contain some generic information refuting the Tooth Fairy premise, it is the staff's intention to focus on data on site releases, the results of the State of Florida environmental monitoring program, and the State epidemiology study on South Florida cancer rates.

In the meantime, the NRC continues to support legitimate scientific inquiry into the effects of radiation. For example, the NRC obtains independent review of scientific studies by providing financial and technical support to such committees as the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) and the National Academies' Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR VII) Committee. We trust that genuine science will eventually prevail over distorted science.

I appreciate your continued interest in health and safety issues facing the NRC. Please contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve