

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

December 14, 1999

Mr. Richard A. Meserve
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Chairman Meserve:

I am writing on behalf of the Massachusetts Citizens for Safe Energy, regarding the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Proposed Rulemaking, Consideration of Potassium Iodide in Emergency Plans.

The stockpiling of KI is a safety measure supported by numerous organizations to protect the public in the case of a nuclear accident. Scientific evidence reveals the benefits of potassium iodide and its advantages in preventing any inhaled or ingested radioactive iodine from being lodged in the thyroid gland. In Tokaimura, Japan, where KI is stockpiled at local hospitals, police distributed potassium iodide tablets after a recent nuclear accident. By doing so, it is certain that Japanese authorities managed to dramatically reduce the numbers of its citizens who were adversely affected by the accident. I believe that it is incumbent upon us to take the same precautions to prevent the devastating effects that a nuclear accident would inevitably yield.

Potassium iodide is one of the easiest, and least expensive means of preventing radioactive iodides from being absorbed by the thyroid. Workers in power plants should not be the only ones for whom this treatment is made available. Schoolchildren and other nearby residents should also be able to receive KI in the event of a nuclear accident. KI is time-critical, and the only way to ensure that residents are able to receive the potassium iodide in enough time is to order the stockpiling of KI in those communities.

I ask that you give the proposal by the Massachusetts Citizens for Safe Energy every consideration. Preventing any unforeseen nuclear disaster from claiming additional lives should not only be an option, it should be a requirement.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Graham Shalgian at (617) 565-3170. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy

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