

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 05/03/02

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FINAL REPLY:

Representative George W. Gekas

TO:

Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** PRI **

CRC NO: 02-0295

Chairman Meserve

DESC:

ROUTING:

Distribution of Potassium Iodide

Travers
Paperiello
Kane
Norry
Craig
Burns/Cyr
Miller, RI
Collins, NRR

DATE: 04/24/02

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:
NSIR Zimmerman

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

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PAPER NUMBER: LTR-02-0295 **LOGGING DATE:** 04/23/2002
ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: REP George Gekas
AFFILIATION: REP
ADDRESSEE: CHRM Richard Meserve
SUBJECT: Concerns NRC's offer to provide potassium iodide for people residing within a 10-mile radius of Pennsylvania's five nuclear facilities

ACTION: Signature of Chairman
DISTRIBUTION: RF

LETTER DATE: 04/23/2002
ACKNOWLEDGED: No
SPECIAL HANDLING:

NOTES: OCA to Ack
Commission Correspondence

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: 05/07/2002 **DATE SIGNED:**

GEORGE W. GEKAS
17TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA



2103 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3817
(202) 225-4315
FAX (202) 225-8440
WWW.HOUSE.GOV/BG0435

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEES
CHAIRMAN IMMIGRATION AND CLAIMS
COMMERCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

HARRISBURG DISTRICT OFFICE
SUITE 202
3605 VARTAN WAY
HARRISBURG, PA 17110-3335
(717) 641-0007
FAX (717) 541-5518

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3817

LANCASTER COUNTY DISTRICT OFFICE
SUITE 102-A
222 SOUTH MARKET STREET
ELIZABETHTOWN, PA 17022-2447
(717) 367-8731 FAX (717) 367-8002
1-800-210-0206

April 23, 2002

LEBANON DISTRICT OFFICE
101 MUNICIPAL BUILDING
400 SOUTH 8TH STREET
LEBANON, PA 17042-6794
(717) 273-1451
FAX (717) 273-1673

Chairman Richard A. Meserve
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North Building
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Chairman Meserve,

I am grateful to have learned that on Thursday, April 18, 2002, Governor Mark Schweiker of Pennsylvania decided to accept the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's offer to provide potassium iodide for people residing within the 10-mile radius around the State's five nuclear facilities, including the Three Mile Island facility in my district.

I strongly support Governor Schweiker's decision to accept the offer of potassium iodide. For a long time, I have recognized the importance of maintaining a potassium iodide stockpile in the event of an emergency. Potassium iodide has been proven to prevent the thyroid gland from absorbing radioactive iodine, a material likely to be released in a catastrophic nuclear accident. While there is the possibility of many other radioactive materials being released in a serious accident, we can at least be sure that potassium iodide will protect individuals from this one form of radiation and from the inevitable after-effects of exposure to radioactive iodine.

However, I do want to voice some concern about potassium iodide and the NRC's offer to the various states. While I believe it is a good decision to allow individuals living around nuclear facilities to have the option of keeping potassium iodide in their homes in the event of an accident, the NRC is only providing pills in an adult dosage and that dosage of potassium iodide may be excessive for children. Children, whose thyroid glands are still developing, are at the greatest risk of developing thyroid cancer in the event of exposure to radioactive iodine, and we need to be sure that the dosage of a vital preventative measure like potassium iodide is suitable for them.

The solution to this problem seems simple. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should take the necessary steps to provide states with the dosages that would be suitable for children. I would ask that you provide me with any NRC proposals to make this happen. I would further urge you to meet with Governor Schweiker's administration to

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address these concerns and offer proposals to them. I offer my good offices to facilitate any such meeting in the future.

I look forward to working with you to come up with a solution that will satisfy the parties involved. If you should have any questions or would like to meet with me to discuss this, please contact me or my staff.

Very truly yours,



GEORGE W. GEKAS
Member of Congress

cc: Deputy Commissioner Lester M. Crawford
United States Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville MD 20857-0001