

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 07/01/11 EDO CONTROL: G20110457
DOC DT: 05/09/11
FINAL REPLY:

Representative Edward J. Markey, et al.,

TO:
President Obama

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** PRI ** CRC NO: 11-0336
Chairman Jaczko

DESC: ROUTING:
Distribution of Potassium Iodide (KI)/Residents
Within 20 Miles of Nuclear Power Plants
(EDATS: SECY-2011-0349)
Borchardt
Weber
Virgilio
Ash
Mamish
OGC/GC
Wiggins, NSIR
Leeds, NRR
Burns, OGC
Schmidt, OCA

DATE: 06/15/11

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:
EDO Rihm

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Please prepare response in accordance with OEDO
Notice 2009-0441-02 (ML093290179). NSIR and NRR to
provide input to Roger Rihm, OEDO, if required.
Roger Rihm to coordinate response with OGC and OCA.
Note: White House Referral #1055183.

Template: SECY-017

E-RIDS: SECY-01

EDATS

Electronic Document and Action Tracking System



EDATS Number: SECY-2011-0349

Source: SECY

General Information

Assigned To: OEDO

OEDO Due Date: 7/1/2011 11:00 PM

Other Assignees:

SECY Due Date: 7/6/2011 11:00 PM

Subject: Distribution of Potassium Iodide (KI)/Residents Within 20 Miles of Nuclear Power Plants

Description:

CC Routing: NSIR; NRR; OGC; OCA

ADAMS Accession Numbers - Incoming: NONE

Response/Package: NONE

Other Information

Cross Reference Number: G20110457, LTR-11-0336

Staff Initiated: NO

Related Task:

Recurring Item: NO

File Routing: EDATS

Agency Lesson Learned: NO

OEDO Monthly Report Item: NO

Process Information

Action Type: Letter

Priority: Medium

Signature Level: Chairman Jaczko

Sensitivity: None

Urgency: NO

Approval Level: No Approval Required

OEDO Concurrence: YES

OCM Concurrence: NO

OCA Concurrence: NO

Special Instructions: Please prepare response in accordance with OEDO Notice 2009-0441-02 (ML093290179). NSIR and NRR to provide input to Roger Rihm, OEDO, if required. Roger Rihm to coordinate response with OGC and OCA. Note: White House Referral #1055183.

Document Information

Originator Name: Representative Edward J. Markey, et al.,

Date of Incoming: 5/9/2011

Originating Organization: Congress

Document Received by SECY Date: 6/15/2011

Addressee: President Barack Obama

Date Response Requested by Originator: NONE

Incoming Task Received: Letter

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

Date Printed: Jun 15, 2011 10:36

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-11-0336 LOGGING DATE: 06/08/2011

ACTION OFFICE: (ED)GC

AUTHOR: REP Edward Markey, et al.

AFFILIATION: CONG

ADDRESSEE: President Barack Obama

SUBJECT: Concerns implementation of the 2002 law requiring the distribution of potassium iodide to residents living within 20 miles of nuclear power plants

ACTION: Signature of Chairman

DISTRIBUTION: Chrm, Comrs, OCA, RF

LETTER DATE: 05/09/2011

ACKNOWLEDGED No

SPECIAL HANDLING: Assigned to EDO/OGC.
White House referral to NRC for Appropriate Action.

NOTES: White House Referral #1055183 is dated May 31, 2011.

FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: 07/06/2011

DATE SIGNED:

WH-1055183

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2011

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to urge you to implement the 2002 law requiring the distribution of potassium iodide to the people who live within 20 miles of nuclear power reactors in order to protect the Americans in at least 33 States against the possibility of a radioactive iodine release from a nearby nuclear reactor. Although this law has been on the books since 2002, it has, inexplicably, yet to be implemented.

Potassium iodide, known by its chemical symbol KI, protects the thyroid gland by flooding it with stable iodine so that the gland cannot take up the cancer-causing radioactive form.¹ Radioactive iodine can be released during nuclear reactor melt-downs such as the one now occurring in Japan.

If an earthquake, terrorist attack, or accident caused a radiation release in the United States, one of the greatest risks to health comes from radioactive forms of the chemical element iodine. Children are the most vulnerable because their thyroid glands concentrate more iodine on a mass basis than adults and are more sensitive to radiation because of their rapidly growing cells. Thyroid cancer was the biggest negative health impact caused by the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster.² More than 6,000 Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian residents who were children at the time of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster developed thyroid cancer. The incidence of thyroid cancer in the contaminated areas was triple that of normal thyroid cancer incidence in the area.³ Despite the elevated levels of radioactive iodine detected in Poland after the Chernobyl accident, exposed individuals in Poland did not experience such an increase in thyroid cancer because they were provided with prophylactic KI.⁴

Section 127 of the Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 directed the President to establish a program to make KI available free to State and local governments for distribution to residents living within 20 miles of a nuclear power plant. Previously, distribution

¹http://www.birdflumanual.com/resources/Self_Defense/files/Guidance%20for%20use%20of%20KI%20for%20nuclear%20emergency%20USG.pdf

²http://www.unscear.org/docs/reports/2008/Advance_copy_Annex_D_Chernobyl_Report.pdf

³ http://www.unscear.org/docs/reports/2008/Advance_copy_Annex_D_Chernobyl_Report.pdf

⁴ Nauman J, Wolff J. (1993) Iodide prophylaxis in Poland after the Chernobyl reactor accident: Benefits and risks. *The American Journal of Medicine*, Volume 94, Issue 5, Pages 524-532.

was limited to just those within 10 miles, and only to States that requested it from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

The Congress' choice of a minimum 20-mile KI distribution radius was driven by its recognition that radiological exposure during a nuclear emergency is almost certain to exceed the "intervention level", set by the NRC to 5 rem, at distances greater than 10 miles from the event. Two NRC-commissioned technical studies predicted exposure at 25 miles from the event to be over 1000 rem, with the probability of thyroid damage to an adult outdoors to be 40%. For infants and children, the potential for damage is much higher.⁵ The Japanese government has evacuated residents within 19 miles of the Fukushima Daiichi reactors, and has distributed potassium iodide to protect against the radioactive iodine being released. The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission is recommending evacuation out to 50 miles from Fukushima Daiichi, and KI is being provided to military personnel and U.S. citizens. Some experts, including the American Thyroid Association, believe that potassium iodide should be pre-distributed to households within 50 miles of a nuclear power plant.

Timing of KI distribution is critical as the drug is most effective if used within 3-4 hours of exposure.⁶ According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), inhalation of radioactive iodine is a significant contributor to exposure and is of particular concern for those residing in the immediate area of a nuclear accident or otherwise directly exposed to the radioactive plume. This means that it is critical to distribute KI to residents and local authorities before a radiation release happens, rather than scrambling to try to do it afterwards as happened during the 1979 Three Mile Island accident.

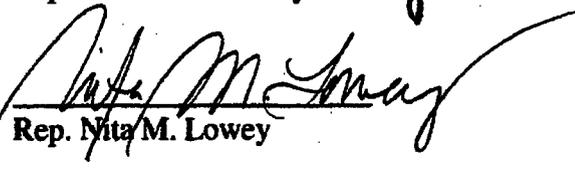
Additionally, rapid evacuation may not be a viable option for residents near many nuclear reactors. The only evacuation route may require driving right past the nuclear reactor for millions of people living near Turkey Point in Florida, the Indian Point reactor near New York City, the Pilgrim nuclear reactor in Massachusetts and for many millions more living near the 104 commercial nuclear reactor sites. Our experience with Hurricane Katrina, and the Japanese experience shows just how difficult it can be to rapidly evacuate large population centers. Distribution of potassium iodide now, before the unlikely event of a disaster, is the prudent course.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. We look forward to your prompt response regarding your plans to implement the law to protect Americans against radioactive iodine.

Sincerely,


Rep. Edward J. Markey


Rep. C.W. Bill Young


Rep. Nita M. Lowey


Rep. Gus Bilirakis

⁵ NUREG/CR-1433, Sandia National Laboratories, October 1980, and NUREG/CR-6310, S. Cohen & Associates, April 1992.

⁶ <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/EmergencyPreparedness/BioterrorismandDrugPreparedness/ucm072265.htm>

Barney Frank
Rep. Barney Frank

Lois Capps
Rep. Lois Capps

Donna Christensen
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John W. Olver
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Michael Honda
Rep. Mike Honda

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Rush Holt
Rep. Rush Holt

John Conyers Jr.
Rep. John Conyers Jr.

Bob Filner
Rep. Bob Filner

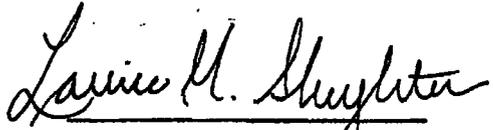
Jim McGovern
Rep. Jim McGovern

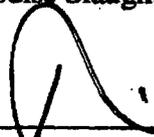
Eliot L. Engel
Rep. Eliot Engel

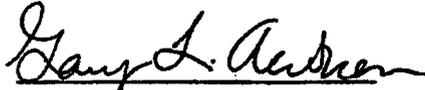
Judy Chu
Rep. Judy Chu

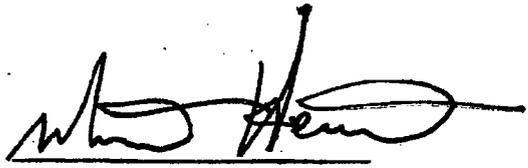
Peter A. DeFazio
Rep. Peter A. DeFazio

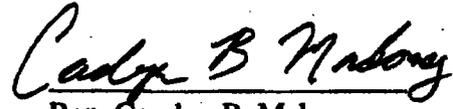
Niki Tsongas
Rep. Niki Tsongas

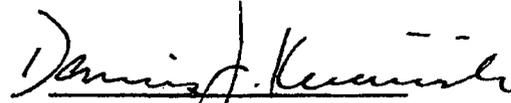

Rep. Louise Slaughter


Rep. Anthony Weiner


Rep. Gary Ackerman


Rep. Martin Heinrich


Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney


Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich

**THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE
REFERRAL**

May 31, 2011

TO: NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION REQUESTED: APPROPRIATE ACTION

REFERRAL COMMENTS:

DESCRIPTION OF INCOMING:

ID: 1055183

MEDIA: LETTER

DOCUMENT DATE: May 09, 2011

TO: PRESIDENT OBAMA

FROM: THE HONORABLE EDWARD MARKEY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

SUBJECT: URGES THE PRESIDENT TO IMPLEMENT THE 2002 LAW REQUIRING THE
DISTRIBUTION OF POTASSIUM IODIDE TO THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITHIN 20
MILES OF NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS TO PROTECT AMERICANS IN 33 STATES
AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF A RADIOACTIVE IODINE RELEASE FROM NEARBY
NUCLEAR REACTOR

COMMENTS:

PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL -- IF REQUIRED ACTION HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN WITHIN 9 WORKING DAYS OF RECEIPT, UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, PLEASE TELEPHONE THE UNDERSIGNED AT (202) 456-2590.

**RETURN ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE, WORKSHEET AND COPY OF RESPONSE (OR DRAFT) TO: DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT, ROOM 85, OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT - THE WHITE HOUSE, 20500
FAX A COPY OF REPOSE TO: (202) 456-5881**

THE WHITE HOUSE
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND
TRACKING WORKSHEET



DATE RECEIVED: May 11, 2011

CASE ID: 1055183

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE EDWARD MARKEY

SUBJECT: URGES THE PRESIDENT TO IMPLEMENT THE 2002 LAW REQUIRING THE DISTRIBUTION OF POTASSIUM IODIDE TO THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITHIN 20 MILES OF NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS TO PROTECT AMERICANS IN 33 STATES AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF A RADIOACTIVE IODINE RELEASE FROM NEARBY NUCLEAR REACTOR

ROUTE TO: AGENCY/OFFICE	(STAFF NAME)	ACTION		DISPOSITION	
		CODE	DATE	TYPE RESPONSE	DATE COMPLETED
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS	ROB NABORS	ORG	05/11/2011		

ACTION COMMENTS:

ASS

A 5/23/11

ACTION COMMENTS:

NRC

A 5/31/11

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION COMMENTS:

ACTION COMMENTS:

COMMENTS: 29 ADDL SIGNEES

MEDIA TYPE: LETTER

USER CODE:

ACTION CODES	TYPE RESPONSE	DISPOSITION	
A = APPROPRIATE ACTION B = RESEARCH AND REPORT BACK D = DRAFT RESPONSE I = INFO COPY/NO ACT NECESSARY R = DIRECT REPLY W/ COPY ORG = ORIGINATING OFFICE	INITIALS OF SIGNER (W.H. STAFF) NRN = NO RESPONSE NEEDED OTBE = OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS	DISPOSITION CODES A = ANSWERED OR ACKNOWLEDGED C = CLOSED X = INTERIM REPLY	COMPLETED DATE DATE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OR CLOSEOUT DATE (MM/DD/YY)

KEEP THIS WORKSHEET ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL INCOMING LETTER AT ALL TIMES
REFER QUESTIONS TO DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT (202)-456-2590
SEND ROUTING UPDATES AND COMPLETED RECORDS TO OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT - DOCUMENT TRACKING UNIT ROOM 85, EEOB.

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