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The Honorable Greta J. Dicus
Chairwoman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Room 18H1, One White Flint North Bldg
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852-2738

Dear Chairwoman:

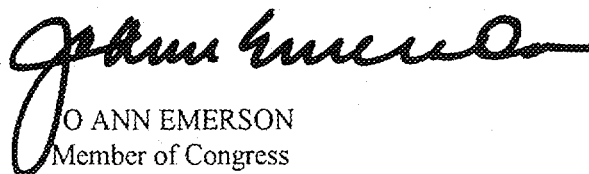
It is my understanding that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will be holding a public hearing on October 21, 1999, to further address a proposed rule change to Part 35-Medical Use of Product Material. I am also aware that the NRC staff's proposed draft regulation, as it relates to the training and experience requirements for the use of radioactive materials (I-131) in the treatment of thyroid disease, recognizes that the continued clinical use of I-131 by endocrinologists is vital to the treatment of hyperthyroidism and thyroid carcinoma.

As you are aware, endocrinologists have maintained an almost impeccable safety record and have accomplished it under the current requirements of 80 hours of training and experience. Although I am aware and certainly share your concerns that safety and the prevention of misadministrations must be paramount in the administration of radioactive medical isotopes, it is evident from your safety records that the overwhelming majority of misadministrations are being performed under the supervision of physicians who have been required to receive a higher amount of training and experience. Therefore, the increase in hours does not appear warranted for the specialty of endocrinology as it relates to the medical use of I-131 for the treatment of thyroid disease.

I respectfully encourage the Commission to continue to weigh carefully the impact a change in regulation would have on the American people. The provision of timely, quality and cost-effective treatment for patients with thyroid disease should not be unduly compromised.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer my input on this important matter and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



JO ANN EMERSON
Member of Congress

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