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October 21, 1999

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

Dear Chairwoman Dicus:

On October 21, 1999, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) held a public hearing to further address a proposed rule change to Part 35-Medical Use of Product Material; it is my understanding that this matter will be formally decided upon by the Commission shortly. 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, maintains the current requirement of 80 hours of training.

I agree that every effort must be made to ensure that safety and the prevention of misadministrations must be paramount in the administration of radioactive medical isotopes. By upholding the current training and experience requirements for use of I-131, the NRC proposed draft regulation recognizes the nearly impeccable safety record of endocrinologists using I-131 and that the continued clinical use of I-131 by endocrinologists is vital to the treatment of hyperthyroidism and thyroid carcinoma. I commend the NRC for its dedication to this concern.

I 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 our input on this important matter. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Rachael Bohlander of my staff at 202/ 224-6550.

Sincerely,

Spencer Abraham
United States Senate

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