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October 27, 1999

The Honorable Greta J. Dicus, Chairperson
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H St NW
Washington, DC 20555-0001

DOCKET NUMBER
PROPOSED RULE **PR 20,32+35**
(63FR43516)

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dear Honorable Dicus:

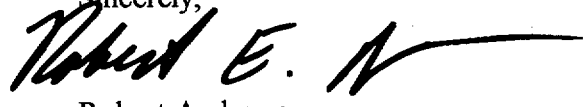
It is my understanding that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will be holding a public hearing on October 21, 1999 to further address a proposed rule change to Part 35-Medical Use of Product Material. I am writing with my support of the NRC staff recommendations regarding endocrinologists.

I feel strongly that the NRC should trust its staff's proposed rule as it relates to the training and experience requirements for the use of radioactive materials (I-131) in the treatment of thyroid disease, which recognizes that the continued clinical use of I-131 by endocrinologists is vital to the treatment of hyperthyroidism and thyroid carcinoma. The NRC staff clearly has conducted thorough research and study and has made a clear, objective recommendation to exempt endocrinologists from the required increase in training and experience hours.

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. I share your concern that safety and the prevention of misadministration must be paramount in the administration of radioactive medical isotopes, it is evident from the safety records that the overwhelming majority of misadministrations are 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 encourage the Commission to continue to weigh carefully the impact of a change in regulation would have on the health of 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 your prompt reply.

Sincerely,


Robert Andrews
Member of Congress

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