

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC SEEKS COMMENT ON PETITION FOR RULEMAKING
CONCERNING USE OF THYROID-PROTECTING DRUG IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a petition for rulemaking which asks that the NRC modify its regulation, 10 CFR 50.47 (b) (10), to require that nuclear power plant emergency plans consider the inclusion of the use of potassium iodide, a thyroid-protecting drug, for the general public.

The deadline for comments is February 17.

Current Federal policy, published July 24, 1985, calls for potassium iodide to be stockpiled for distribution during emergencies to emergency workers and institutionalized persons. If taken in time, the substance blocks most of the thyroid gland's uptake of radioactive iodine. It could thus help reduce the risk of thyroid cancer and other diseases that might otherwise be caused by exposure to radioactive iodine which could be dispersed in a severe nuclear accident.

The Commission last year voted to approve a proposed revision to the current Federal policy which would offer to provide funding for states which want to stockpile potassium iodide for use by the general public in the event of a nuclear power plant emergency.

The rulemaking petition now pending before the Commission calls for a change in NRC regulations to specify that states and licensees consider the use of potassium iodide, as well as evacuation and sheltering, in the preparation of nuclear power plant emergency plans.

The petition was filed by Peter G. Crane, an NRC staff attorney who took the action as a private citizen. The original January 16 deadline for comments has been extended by 30 days to allow sufficient time for public comment. Persons wishing copies of the petition may write: Rules and Directives Branch, Division

of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. A copy of the petition and other related documents are also available at the NRC Public Document Room, 2120 L Street NW (Lower Level), Washington, DC. The petition also may be accessed on the Internet at http://ruleforum.llnl.gov/cgi-bin/rulemake?source=KI_PETITION.

Comments should be mailed to: Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff. Comments also may be delivered to 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, between 7:30 a. m. and 4:15 p. m. on Federal workdays. They also may be provided through the NRC's interactive rulemaking website, which may be reached via the Internet at <http://www.nrc.gov> by looking for rulemaking under the heading "Public Participation and School Programs."

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