

JANUARY 18, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY SAYS IT IS NEGLIGENT NOT TO STOCKPILE POTASSIUM IODIDE PILLS THAT COULD SAVE LIVES IN ILLINOIS IN CASE OF ATTACK ON NUCLEAR FACILITIES**

**CALLS ON GOVERNOR RYAN TO REVERSE HIS POLICY**

CHICAGO, IL - Yesterday, the FBI issued an alert to 18,000 law enforcement agencies around the country after discovering evidence that members of al Qaeda have been looking at Web sites for nuclear power plants across the United States. Nonetheless, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) said Governor Ryan continues to refuse the federal government's offer to provide Illinois with ample supplies of potassium iodide to protect residents living within ten miles of nuclear facilities. Potassium iodide, when provided to individuals within a few hours of exposure, insulates the thyroid gland preventing it from absorbing dangerous substances.

In a letter to the Governor, Schakowsky wrote, "Given the fact that Illinois is home to 11 of 106 nuclear power facilities in the nation and in light of the horrific events of September 11, I am particularly troubled that you have decided against this common-sense safety measure for Illinois." Schakowsky added that states including Arizona, Alabama, Tennessee, Massachusetts, and Maine have decided to accept the federal government's offer and stockpile potassium iodide in case of an emergency.

"I realize that stockpiling and distribution of potassium iodide alone will not be enough to guarantee the safety of Illinois residents. I support all efforts to prevent and plan for possible terrorist attacks on our nuclear facilities. However, I believe we need to make every possible effort to defend the public against such occurrences. Stockpiling potassium iodide pills is an important step in meeting that goal," she continued.

Schakowsky concluded, "I believe that the state could and should obtain potassium iodide from the NRC and distribute it to schools, local health facilities and those living within a critical proximity to nuclear facilities in the state. Given the fact that such efforts could take place with little or no cost to the state, to do otherwise would be negligent."

January 18, 2002

The Honorable George H. Ryan  
Governor of Illinois

Dear Governor Ryan:

**I am writing to you today out of concern that you have not directed state officials to stockpile potassium iodide pills to protect Illinois residents living near nuclear power facilities. I hope you will consider a change in policy.**

**As you know, the federal government has moved forward with creation of a national potassium iodide stockpile. Furthermore, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has offered to provide states with ample supplies to treat populations living within ten miles of nuclear power facilities. Some states including Arizona, Alabama, Tennessee, Massachusetts, and Maine have decided to stockpile potassium iodide in case of an emergency.**

**Given the fact that Illinois is home to 11 of 106 nuclear power facilities in the nation and in light of the horrific events of September 11, I am particularly troubled that you have decided against this common-sense safety measure for Illinois. As you know, potassium iodide when provided to individuals within a few hours of exposure to Iodine 131, insulates the thyroid gland preventing it from absorbing the dangerous substance. When combined with other necessary prevention and planning efforts, stockpiling and distributing potassium iodide where appropriate also is supported by the Food and Drug Administration, World Health Organization, the American Thyroid Association, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Health And Human Services.**

**I realize that stockpiling and distribution of potassium iodide alone will not be enough to guarantee the safety of Illinois residents. I support all efforts to prevent and plan for possible terrorist attacks on our nuclear facilities. However, I believe we need to make every possible effort to defend the public against such occurrences. Stockpiling potassium iodide pills is an important step in meeting that goal.**

**I believe that the state could and should obtain potassium iodide from the NRC and distribute it to schools, local health facilities and those living within a critical proximity to nuclear facilities in the state. Given the fact that such efforts could take place with little or no cost to the state, to do otherwise would be negligent.**

**Again, I strongly urge you to reconsider your policy and immediately take all possible steps to protect the people of Illinois from possible terrorist attacks. Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to your response.**

**Sincerely,**

**Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress**