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**DR. MARBURGER DECIDES TO WAIVE EXPANDED DISTRIBUTION OF POTASSIUM
IODIDE TABLETS BEYOND 10 MILES FROM NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS**
Determines More Effective Alternative Exists

Washington, DC – The Science Advisor to President Bush and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Dr. John H. Marburger III, decided today to waive an expanded Potassium Iodide (KI) distribution program beyond 10 miles from nuclear power plants. The Federal Government will not distribute KI tablets to the population living in a 10 to 20 mile zone surrounding nuclear power plants because it is more effective to evacuate the area and avoid exposure to radioactive materials altogether.

“I decided to invoke the waiver provision because it will result in more effective protection of public health should an accident ever occur at a nuclear power plant. My technical review determined it’s best to avoid exposure to radioactive materials altogether by evacuating the area and avoiding consuming contaminated food,” said Dr. John Marburger.

“I also recommend, however, that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission conduct a thorough review of its current program, and promulgate ‘best practice’ guidelines for the existing program that distributes KI to populations within 10 miles of a nuclear power plant,” stated Dr. Marburger. “These guidelines should be developed with other relevant federal agencies, state and local governments, and other interested stakeholders.”

The current Nuclear Regulatory Commission program makes KI available to States for stockpiling and further distribution to populations within a nuclear power plant’s 10 mile emergency planning zone. The Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 directed the President to expand the KI distribution range to 20 miles. Congress included a waiver provision, however, that could be invoked if the President determined a more effective alternative exists. In July 2007, the President delegated to his Science Advisor, Dr. Marburger, the authority to invoke this waiver provision, should it be found to be appropriate based upon a technical review.

Dr. Marburger convened an interagency process to study the relevant technical issues and inform his decision. He also received input from non-governmental sources including members of the public health community and a National Academy of Sciences report.

To view Dr. Marburger’s decision memorandum and the interagency technical evaluation paper please visit: <http://www.ostp.gov/ki>.

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