

C.W. BILL YOUNG  
10TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

2407 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0910  
(202) 225-5961

COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0910

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
SUITE 1480  
360 CENTRAL AVENUE  
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701-3836  
(727) 893-3191

9210 113TH STREET  
SEMINOLE, FL 33772-2800  
(727) 394-6950

SELECT INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT PANEL

[www.house.gov/young](http://www.house.gov/young)

March 23, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

As you know, last June, thirteen bipartisan members of the Florida delegation sent you a letter, a copy of which is enclosed for your information, asking you to reconsider the decision of the Department of Health and Human Services to rely exclusively upon evacuation to protect most Americans if there is a nuclear emergency caused by a disaster or terrorist attack. The stockpiling of Potassium Iodide tablets (KI) would be limited to those areas within 10 miles of an existing nuclear facility.

At the time, we suggested there was no empirical data that would warrant the assumption that evacuation alone would be an effective and practical public policy, especially for a state with Florida's geography, just as there was no reason to assume nuclear emergencies would only happen near a nuclear facility. We pointed out that the Bioterrorism Act of 2002 required more, and that most scientists agree with the recommendations in the 2004 National Academy of Sciences report, namely that KI distribution programs should include "predistribution, local stockpiling outside the emergency planning zones, and national stockpiles and distribution capacity."

We are all working to ensure that this nation is as prepared as possible for emergencies and disasters, particularly in light of the horrific natural disaster and subsequent nuclear tragedy in Japan. It is critical to learn from this incident as we prepare here at home. We must ensure that the necessary plans are in place in the rare event of a nuclear emergency, and we must evaluate all possible countermeasures and options - including the stockpiling and distribution of Potassium Iodide.

It was our hope that by working together, on a bipartisan basis, we would be able to identify and implement the very best policy concerning KI - one that ensures not only Floridians, but all Americans, are adequately prepared and protected regardless of the cause or location of the disaster. Today, some ten months later, there has been no response from your Department to our request.

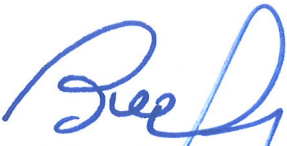
The catastrophe in Japan should be a wake-up call to this Administration. We are in a unique position to act before there is a tragedy on our own soil. There is simply no excuse for failing to stockpile all necessary preventive measures, including KI, especially if the public may be required to remain in areas that could be contaminated until evacuation plans can be implemented. If evacuation alone is an adequate solution, why is the Department now rushing supplies of KI to embassy personnel in Japan?

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
March 23, 2011  
Page 2


We realize that you take seriously your obligation to protect the American public's health and safety; however, indifference and inattention are no longer an acceptable response. The time has come for the Department and the White House to act. Please provide us with an explanation of your plans to implement fully the Bioterrorism Act of 2002 and to address the recommendations of the 2004 National Academy of Sciences Report.

We look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,



C. W. Bill Young  
Member of Congress



Gus Bilirakis  
Member of Congress