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August 1, 2005

Cynthia Dougherty  
Director, Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
Mail Code 4601M  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Ms. Dougherty,

As you go into your 2006 review of standards for radionuclides in drinking water, we urge you to carefully examine the report entitled [\*Bad to the Bone: Analysis of the Federal Maximum Contaminant Levels for Plutonium-239 and Other Alpha-Emitting Transuranic Radionuclides in Drinking Water\*](#) prepared by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. The careful scientific analysis in this report shows that the present Maximum Contaminant Limit of 15 picocuries per liter for gross alpha contamination, which includes plutonium-239 and other alpha-emitting, long-lived transuranic radionuclides, no longer fulfills the letter and intent of the drinking water regulations in terms of protection of public health.

The changed scientific understanding in regards to the dangers of plutonium and related radionuclides in the three decades since the drinking water regulations were first promulgated shows that a much tighter MCL should be set for alpha-emitting, long-lived transuranic radionuclides. The MCL should be 0.15 picocuries per liter. The limit today is a hundred times greater - 15 picocuries per liter in the absence of any other alpha-emitting radionuclides in the water.

The EPA did not revise the MCL during its last review of radioactivity in drinking water in the year 2000, despite the fact that the EPA itself has published dose conversion factors and other information that indicated that the MCL for alpha-emitting, long-lived transuranic radionuclides was outdated and no longer fulfilled the intent of the regulation as it was promulgated in 1976.

We, the undersigned, endorse the recommendations of the IEER report on the MCLs for alpha-emitting, long-lived transuranic radionuclides in drinking water. Specifically, we are asking you to adopt its central recommendation that the combined MCL for alpha-emitting, long-lived transuranic radionuclides be set at 0.15 picocuries per liter. The regulation should also reflect the

corresponding IEER recommendation for a lower detection limit. Please contact Dr. Arjun Makhijani, the author of the report and president of IEER, at 301-270-5500 or arjun[at]ieer.org if you have any questions about this letter or the report.

Thanking you in anticipation,

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466. Jiemh Zuy  
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*466 signatures as of June 1, 2008*