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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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OCEAN COUNTY RESIDENTS NEAR NUCLEAR PLANT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE POTASSIUM IODIDE PILLS

As recent world events unfold, the Ocean County Health Department and the Ocean County Office Sherriff's Department, Office of Emergency Management, are reminding Ocean County residents residing or working within a 10-mile radius of the nuclear power plant in Forked River that they are eligible to receive potassium iodide (KI) pills that can be used in case of a plant emergency.

Freeholder Deputy Director Gerry P. Little, Liaison to the Ocean County Health Department, stated, **"The potassium iodide, or KI pills have been offered as a preparedness measure for approximately ten years now and not in response to any imminent danger or threat."**

Freeholder John P. Kelly, Director of Law and Public Safety, said, "Individuals who have KI pills in their possession would follow the instructions that were distributed by the Ocean County Health Department upon receipt of the pills. Persons allergic to shellfish and iodine should consult with their physician prior to ingesting KI."

Daniel Regenye, Ocean County Health Department Public Health Coordinator, pointed out that the pills can be effective in preventing thyroid cancer in cases of exposure to radioactive iodine. If taken before or shortly after exposure, potassium iodide blocks the thyroid gland's ability to absorb radioactive iodine.

The Ocean County Sherriff's Department, Office of Emergency Management, pointed out that the ingestion of Potassium Iodide must be authorized by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and only conducted upon the declaration of a General Emergency (GE) during a radiological emergency and a State Office of Emergency Management Protective Action Decision. If this issue ever occurred, the public would be notified through the Emergency Alert System radio and television stations.

"The pills do not protect the body from other radiation-related injuries due to exposure and are only a supplement to evacuation, the primary mode of protection during a radiological emergency," said Regenye. He continued, "Any resident who lives or works within 10-miles of the nuclear facility in Forked River can arrange to pick-up free KI pills for the entire family," Regenye said. "Pills are distributed only by appointment and with proof of residency. Appointments can be made by calling 732-341-9700, ext. 7502 or 800-342-9738, ext. 7502."

PR/KI pills/pg2/3142011

Municipalities within the 10-mile radius include Barnegat, Barnegat Light, Beach Haven, Beachwood, Berkeley, Toms River, Harvey Cedars, Island Heights, Lacey, Long Beach, Pine Beach, Ocean (Waretown), Ocean Gate, Seaside Park, Ship Bottom, South Toms River, Stafford and Surf City.

To obtain a fact sheet on KI, please visit the Ocean County Health Department Web site at www.ochd.org.

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