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**Subject:** Radiation Levels

P6/b(6)

Denis and I thought it would be worthwhile to advise you of some developments on the domestic public engagement front related to the nuclear incident in Japan.

Routine radiation monitoring in several parts of the United States, including on both coasts, has detected low levels of I-131 in rainwater (currently detected in three states). These levels are 25 times lower than those reported in the press for Tokyo in drinking water and which led to the brief advisory there. Concentrations in drinking water are generally far lower than those in rainwater (except for households which collect rainwater to drink).

The levels being detected are below those which would be expected to harm human health. Nevertheless, federal departments and agencies have been keeping State officials fully informed of developments, and some state officials—especially Governor Patrick—are concerned about having this information and not sharing it with the public. Thus, several states signaled their intention to go public with this information at noon today. The MA public health commissioner plans to do a press availability at that time.

John Holdren has worked closely with EPA and CDC to come up with precise language that is being shared with state officials this morning and which will be posted on federal websites regarding the detection of low levels of I-131 in rainwater. The statement is pasted below. It is our understanding that several states will release the information publicly at noon today.

As a result of the incident with the Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan, several EPA monitors have detected very low levels of radioactive material in the United States consistent with estimates from the damaged nuclear reactors. These detections were expected and the levels detected are far below levels of public-health concern.

Elevated levels of radioactive material in rainwater have been expected as a result of the nuclear incident after the events in Japan since radiation is known to travel in the atmosphere. There have been reports received that the states of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts have seen elevated levels of radiation in recent precipitation events. EPA is reviewing this data – however, in both cases these are levels above the normal background levels historically reported in these areas.

While short-term elevations such as these do not raise health concerns – and the levels seen in rainwater are expected to be relatively short in duration – the U.S. EPA has taken steps to increase the level of nationwide monitoring of precipitation, drinking water, and other potential exposure routes to continue to verify that.

EPA's only recommendation to state and local governments is to continue to

coordinate closely with EPA, CDC and FDA – EPA will continue to communicate our nationwide sampling results as they come in.