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Insignificant Amounts of Radiation Detected by State Monitoring Equipment
Levels Pose No Health Threat; Amounts Many Times Less than Background Radiation Doses

PHOENIX– Trace amounts of Iodine-131 radioactive material associated with releases from the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant in Japan have been detected by Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (ARRA) instrumentation located west of the valley and in Phoenix.

“The average background radiation can range from 100-300 millirems per year,” according to Aubrey Godwin, Director of the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency. “The amount of additional radiation we are seeing in Arizona is less than **0.1** millirem. Such low concentrations of Iodine-131 do not pose a public health threat to Arizonans.”

ARRA expected to see a slight increase in detectable radiation as a result of the still unfolding emergency in Japan and due to the high sensitivity of monitoring equipment. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) maintains that the precautionary ingestion of potassium iodide (KI) is unnecessary and there is no benefit to taking it right now. Arizonans who take KI unnecessarily could place themselves in danger of negative side effects, including severe allergic reactions, abnormal heart rhythms and nausea.

ARRA monitors radiation levels in the state as a function of its oversight of the Radiation Measurements Laboratory. It continues to monitor levels of radiation from Japan in addition to its ongoing surveillance near Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station west of Phoenix.

The Arizona Department of Agriculture and ARRA regularly test food produced in the state as part of the ongoing efforts to ensure a safe food supply. The sampling looks for several potential contaminants including radiation.

Readings from the ARRA Radiation Measurements Laboratory will be shared via the Arizona Emergency Information Network (AzEIN), www.azein.gov, until the detectable affects of the Japan nuclear emergency naturally dissipate.

For more information on the emergency in Japan, including answers to some frequently asked questions, visit the AzEIN website or email questions to azein@azdema.gov.