

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 9, 2018

Bill Wehrum  
Assistant Administrator, Air and Radiation Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Wehrum:

We write to request the Air and Radiation Division (ARD) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conduct modeling and air sampling analysis of ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions at two sites in Lake County, Illinois—Medline Industries, Inc. in Waukegan and Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc. in Gurnee. We also request that ARD coordinate with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to perform an evaluation with the modeled and measured EtO results to determine what the public health risk is for the area. This request stems from changes in the 2016 Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) report and the 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) that found EtO to have a 30-fold increase in cancer potency.

In May, the EPA conducted air sampling and modeling around Sterigenics International Inc.—a facility in Willowbrook, Illinois, that uses EtO to sterilize medical equipment. After ATSDR evaluated these results, it was recommended that Sterigenics take immediate action to reduce its EtO emissions. Since then, it has been discovered that two other facilities in Lake County, Illinois, are also responsible for emitting concerning EtO concentrations based upon the new, lower inhalation unit risk from IRIS.

We ask that air sampling and modeling analyses are performed and provided to ATSDR to evaluate the risk of short-term and long-term exposure of EtO in the air surrounding these facilities. This information is crucial for better understanding the implications of EtO exposure within the community and for setting a new and more appropriate EtO national standard.

Thank you for considering our requests, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
RICHARD J. DURBIN      TAMMY DUCKWORTH      BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER  
United States Senator      United States Senator      United States Representative