

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 1, 2018

The Honorable Charles Sheehan
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Acting Inspector General Sheehan,

We officially request the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigate if EPA complied with all statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements and protocols when it intentionally withheld critical health information from the public about carcinogenic air pollution from the Sterigenics facility in DuPage County, Illinois. We are concerned that the agency failed to take swift action to protect the health of a community that suffers from some of the highest cancer risks in the nation.

The 2016 Integrated Risk Information System report found ethylene oxide (EtO) to be much more carcinogenic at lower concentrations than previously thought. As a result, the 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment showed that DuPage County residents have an increased cancer risk from EtO exposure. In December 2017, EPA sent a letter to Sterigenics linking high cancer risks in the area to EtO emissions from the facility. However, EPA decided to withhold this vital information from the public for eight months.

An investigation is necessary to determine whether proper measures were taken to protect the lives of those affected by EtO emissions from the facility, to hold officials accountable, and to assure that proper protocol is followed in the future if any similar situation arises.

The EPA is responsible for protecting human health with safeguards to assure our nation has clean and safe air, water, and environment for all Americans. Making certain that proper action is taken when it is discovered that a community is facing a public health risk, is essential for the public to have confidence that the EPA is doing its job.

We look forward to your prompt response to this urgent request for a comprehensive investigation.

Sincerely,


RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator


TAMMY DUCKWORTH
United States Senator


BILL FOSTER
United States Representative