

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

November 7, 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,

I write to follow up on a request from November 1 and ask the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate if statutory authority and proper protocols were followed when critical health information about carcinogenic ethylene oxide pollution from two additional facilities—Medline Industries, Inc. in Waukegan and Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc. in Gurnee—was intentionally withheld from residents in Lake County, Illinois.

After the findings of the 2016 Integrated Risk Information System report that indicated ethylene oxide (EtO) is much more carcinogenic at lower concentrations than previously thought, EPA acknowledged the increased risks but did not inform residents in DuPage and Lake counties of facilities near them that use and emit EtO and how those emission could cause long-term health concerns. This news is especially concerning as Vantage Specialty Chemicals has not reported its most recent EtO emissions, as it is required to do, and previous reports show that Vantage released more EtO than both Sterigenics and Medline.

Withholding this vital public health information from the communities with potentially high EtO exposure is unacceptable. The residents need reassurance that the EPA has their best interests in mind and is taking the proper steps to ensure the air they breathe is clean.

For this reason, I ask you expand the scope of my previously requested investigation to include the facilities in Lake County. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator