

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1504

July 27, 2017

Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

I would like to request the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) conduct an assessment of the public health risks posed by storage and handling of manganese in Southeast Chicago.

Air pollution monitors installed in Southeast Chicago for petroleum coke study have also detected potentially dangerous levels of manganese. Residents in this area have reported a yellow dust coating on their homes, and are concerned about the possible negative health effects in their community. I believe that these concerns and preliminary air quality data warrant further investigation.

Manganese is a known neurotoxin. According to the ATSDR toxicological profile for manganese, there is clear evidence that human exposure to high levels of manganese dust can lead to serious neurological effects. Several studies of children indicate that high manganese concentrations can impair neurological development. The previous ATSDR assessment of airborne manganese in the community surrounding the S.H. Bell facility in East Liverpool, Ohio, indicates that long-term airborne exposure can lead to negative neurological effects.

It is clear that public exposure to manganese dust can lead to serious health, safety, and environmental issues. I am concerned that many Chicagoans living around facilities that store and handle magnesium are regularly exposed to dust pollution that is extraordinarily dangerous. Therefore, I urge ATSDR to thoroughly examine any potential negative public health impacts caused by manganese in Southeast Chicago and other residential communities, and to develop health-based recommendations for airborne manganese exposure.

Sincerely,



Richard Durbin
U.S. Senator