

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

January 25, 2019

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler  
Acting Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20004

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

As the longest U.S. government shutdown in history continues, we are increasingly concerned about the status of and effects this closure poses to the ethylene oxide (EtO) monitoring operations being conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at Sterigenics in Willowbrook, Illinois, and any progress towards promulgating new EtO standards under the Clean Air Act. We also are concerned about the delay of several pending requests from a letter sent to EPA in October by several members of our delegation for two EtO emitting facilities in Lake County, Illinois—Medline Industries, Inc. and Vantage Specialty Chemicals Inc.—to set up ambient air monitoring and to guarantee necessary steps are taken to limit EtO emissions.

At Sterigenics specifically, we are concerned about how the shutdown affects the EPA canister collection and analysis process, quality assurance procedures, and dissemination of information to the neighborhoods near this facility so that residents who are concerned about their health are properly informed. We are also worried that any disruption in these efforts could prevent the EPA from ensuring that dangerous levels of EtO are not emitted into the air and creating unsafe breathing conditions for those who reside within both DuPage and Cook Counties.

The results of the 2016 Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) report has shown EtO to be much more carcinogenic than was previously thought. As a result, the most recent National Air Toxics Assessment indicated that DuPage, Cook, and Lake County residents have an increased cancer risk from chronic EtO exposure. This finding has caused residents in these communities to be rightfully distressed about the EtO emissions from facilities that use EtO for sterilization.

Since this update, EPA began outdoor ambient air monitoring of EtO around the Sterigenics facility in November to ensure that the newly modified pollution control equipment effectively limits emissions from the stack, and that there are limited fugitive emissions. Any lapse in this monitoring leaves the EPA's efforts to characterize the EtO concentrations

surrounding the facility without crucial information needed to protect the communities affected by EtO emissions.

We request information from EPA about how it will ensure the necessary actions are being taken to protect residents in the affected communities from EtO emissions during the government shutdown.

Thank you for your review of this important issue, and we look forward to your expeditious response.

Sincerely,



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Sean Casten  
United States Representative



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Bill Foster  
United States Representative



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Daniel W. Lipinski  
United States Representative



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Bradley S. Schneider  
United States Representative