

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

September 27, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Office of the Administrator, Room 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

I am writing to call your attention to a serious environmental and public health hazard in East Chicago, Indiana, risking public health in surrounding communities of Indiana and Illinois.

The Chicago Tribune and other news outlets have published articles highlighting Suncoke Energy's Indiana Harbor coke-making facility's violations and contributions to Chicago's air pollution. Indiana Harbor has been cited by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) six times since 2010 for violations including high levels of sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and lead. Yet, the EPA has not yet taken legal action against Indiana Harbor Coke Co. in response to these continued violations.

I am particularly concerned about public health risks associated with these emissions. Exposure to particulate matter 10 micrometers or less has been associated with respiratory and cardiovascular problems including cardiovascular disease, asthma complications, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, and increased risk of heart attack.¹ Lead is a potent toxin that adversely effects the nervous system, immune system, reproductive system, blood levels, and cognition.²

It is clear that these emissions violations can lead to serious health and environmental problems for the immediate East Chicago neighborhood, as well as surrounding communities in both Indiana and Illinois. Therefore, I am calling on the EPA to exercise its authorities to limit exposure to these emissions by ensuring that Suncoke Energy's Indiana Harbor coke-making facility is complying with Clean Air Act regulations—including the National Ambient Air Quality Standards—and mitigating any potential health and safety issues. Section 113 of the Clean Air Act offers several enforcement options to protect public health, including administrative penalties, judicial civil action, and judicial criminal action.

¹United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Integrated Science Assessment for Particulate Matter* (December, 2009) accessed at https://cfpub.epa.gov/si/si_public_record_report.cfm?dirEntryId=216546.

²United States Environmental Protection Agency, *Integrated Science Assessment for Lead* (July 2013) accessed at <https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/isa/recordisplay.cfm?deid=255721>.

I was pleased that, during your recent visit to East Chicago, you pledged to restore confidence to people in the community. I look forward to hearing your specific plans to address the concerns with the Indiana Harbor facility and protect the community from harmful pollution.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator