

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

July 27, 2017

James Langbehn
Terminal Manager, S.H. Bell
10218 South Avenue O
Chicago, IL 60617

Dear Mr. Langbehn:

I am writing to ask what steps S.H. Bell currently takes to mitigate any potential health and safety issues caused by the processing, transportation, or storage of manganese, and how these efforts can be strengthened to better protect the public.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, S.H. Bell is subject to air quality requirements under its federally enforceable state operating permit. The Agency began investigating manganese particulate emissions in 2014, and I am pleased that S.H. Bell recently installed air quality monitors. I am however still concerned that approximately 20,000 Illinoisans living within one mile of the S.H. Bell facility are still regularly exposed to manganese particulate emissions.

According to the Center for Disease Control, 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.

News outlets, including the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Tonight, have published articles highlighting the health dangers of manganese stored in Southeast Chicago. Nearby residents are particularly concerned because manganese dust is a known neurotoxin, but is difficult to detect, increasing uncertainty about the extent of danger to the community.

It is clear that public exposure to manganese particles leads to serious health and environmental problems. Therefore, I urge S.H. Bell to use every available method to limit Illinoisans' exposure to manganese and look forward to hearing your plans to protect the surrounding areas from its harmful effects.

Sincerely,



Richard Durbin
U.S. Senator