



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

July 22, 2019

Patrick Breysse, PhD, CIH  
Director, National Center for Environmental Health and  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
4770 Buford Highway NE  
Atlanta, GA 30341

Dear Director Breysse:

Thank you for the letter that you sent on May 28, 2019 to me and other members of Congress in response to our concerns regarding the EPA's predicted high levels of ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions from specific industrial sources in areas we represent. In your letter, you clearly outlined the ongoing process for monitoring the levels of EtO in Lake County, Illinois. While I appreciate the update you provided for Lake County, Illinois, I remain deeply concerned that possible inhalation exposure in my district continues to go unaddressed.

Lehigh County—in my Congressional District—was included among the 18 counties listed in the National Air Toxic Assessment in August of 2018 with EtO emissions exceeding the EPA's reasonable risk threshold of 100 excess cancer cases per million people.

It is well documented that inhalation exposure results in an unacceptable high risk of cancer and potentially in an increased risk of reproductive health problems. For example, in a 1977 report, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) listed EtO as mutagenic and potential carcinogenic. In 1981, NIOSH reported on new evidence of carcinogenic, mutagenic, and reproductive hazards associated with EtO. That report states that EtO “will bind covalently and irreversibly to mammalian protein, human protein, and mammalian DNA,” and that EtO exposure has not been found to be safe at any level.

EtO exposure has been linked to reproductive and developmental impairments. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services revised the classification of EtO to “known to be a carcinogen” and in 2016, the EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) assessed EtO to hold a 30 times higher risk for cancer than previously reported.

As the Representative of the people of Lehigh County, I am requesting a formal Health Consultation from the ATSDR for an evaluation of potential health impacts for ethylene oxide emissions in Lehigh and Northampton Counties. In addition, I look forward to receiving follow-up information on results of or plans for current and future monitoring of the atmospheric levels of EtO in my district.

Thank you for your anticipated attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan Wild", with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

SUSAN WILD  
Member of Congress