



# Durbin, Duckworth, Schneider call on Trump Administration to improve its monitoring of cancer-causing pollution in Lake County

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CHICAGO – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U. S. Representative Brad Schneider (D-IL-10) today, in a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), requested it perform updated and current air sampling and modeling studies to determine the cancer risks in Lake County, Illinois, caused by ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions at Medline Industries, Inc. and Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc. The EPA has not conducted air emissions quality tests for these two facilities since the 2016 Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) report and the 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) that found EtO to have a 30-fold increase in cancer potency.

“We ask that air sampling and modeling analyses are performed and provided to ATSDR to evaluate the risk of short-term and long-term exposure of EtO in the air surrounding these facilities. This information is crucial for better understanding the implications of EtO exposure within the community and for setting a new and more appropriate EtO national standard,” the members wrote.

Last week, the *Chicago Tribune* published a [story](#) that details how the two facilities in Lake County appear to emit cancer-causing emissions, yet the Trump Administration, along with Governor Rauner’s Administration, delayed giving this pertinent information to Illinoisans and still have not properly tested air quality in the area. Durbin, Duckworth, and Schneider have [pressed](#) the EPA to perform an in-depth investigation into EtO emissions at Medline Industries, Inc. and Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc. In addition, the members urged EPA to publish a timeline for when it will revise the current Clean Air Act (CAA) EtO standards to limit future emission to a level deemed safe by the 2016 Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and 2014 National

Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) reports. These recent reports have shown that the existing standards need to be lowered to protect public health in communities across the county.

Additionally, Durbin, Duckworth, and Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL-11) have [requested](#) the EPA OIG to investigate if EPA complied with all statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements and protocols when it intentionally withheld critical health information from the public about carcinogenic air pollution from the Sterigenics facility in DuPage County, Illinois.

Durbin and Duckworth are set to meet with Andrew Wheeler, EPA Acting Administrator, in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, November 14.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below:

November 9, 2018

Dear Mr. Wehrum:

We write to request the Air and Radiation Division (ARD) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conduct modeling and air sampling analysis of ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions at two sites in Lake County, Illinois—Medline Industries, Inc. in Waukegan and Vantage Specialty Chemicals, Inc. in Gurnee. We also request that ARD coordinate with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to perform an evaluation with the modeled and measured EtO results to determine what the public health risk is for the area. This request stems from changes in the 2016 Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) report and the 2014 National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) that found EtO to have a 30-fold increase in cancer potency.

In May, the EPA conducted air sampling and modeling around Sterigenics International Inc.—a facility in Willowbrook, Illinois, that uses EtO to sterilize medical equipment. After ATSDR evaluated these results, it was recommended that Sterigenics take immediate action to reduce its EtO emissions. Since then, it has been discovered that two other facilities in Lake County, Illinois, are also responsible for emitting concerning EtO concentrations based upon the new, lower inhalation unit risk from IRIS.

We ask that air sampling and modeling analyses are performed and provided to ATSDR to evaluate the risk of short-term and long-term exposure of EtO in the air surrounding these facilities. This information is crucial for better understanding the implications of EtO exposure within the community and for setting a new and more appropriate EtO national standard.

Thank you for considering our requests, and we look forward to your response.