



Durbin, Duckworth, Kelly statement on report of additional manganese source in Southeast Chicago

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and U.S. Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL-02) today released the following statements after a *Chicago Tribune* [report](#) found that air monitors recorded dangerous levels of brain-damaging manganese at Watco Transloading on Chicago’s Southeast Side. The members raised concerns about the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) failure to consistently hold companies accountable for violations of the *Clean Air Act*, and highlighted the EPA’s ability to force facilities to monitor and test their air emissions for manganese air pollution—a known neurotoxin—on the Southeast Side of Chicago.

“The EPA must use its full authority under the *Clean Air Act* to protect human health and the environment, and time after time we’ve seen it fail to do so on Chicago’s Southeast Side. The report of an additional source of manganese at another facility is troubling and requires swift action in order to protect countless families that live in the area. I’ll be demanding EPA take immediate steps to stop this pollution and hold those responsible accountable,” Durbin said.

“It’s unacceptable that children in Chicago or anywhere else could get sick by spending too much time outside in their own neighborhood. Unfortunately, that experience is far too common in neighborhoods across America, particularly in communities of color,” said Duckworth. “Whether it involves Watco on the Southeast Side or Sterigenics in DuPage County, it appears the Trump Administration is failing to protect families from toxic chemicals and hold polluters accountable and that is absolutely unacceptable.”

“The health and safety of our neighbors is one of my top priorities in Congress. I’m disappointed to again learn that many of our neighbors are being exposed to unsafe levels of manganese; swift and immediate corrective action, coupled with accountability, is absolutely imperative,” said Kelly. “A few years ago, we were able to

address an unsafe petcoke deposit in this community and ensure a healthier environment for Chicagoland families. We can and must do that again – immediately.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, high levels of manganese dust exposure can cause serious neurological effects, learning difficulties, and memory loss. Recent studies have shown a link between manganese exposure and lower child IQ scores. Researchers at University of Illinois at Chicago’s School of Public Health found that children in Southeast Chicago have higher levels of manganese in their toenails than children in other parts of the City.

In May, Durbin, Duckworth, and Kelly [wrote](#) to then-EPA Administrator Pruitt about the agency’s failure to consistently hold facilities accountable for dangerous emissions of manganese.