

Local Residents, United Congregations Of Metro East, And Sierra Club Illinois Respond To Dangerous Fire At Industrial Recycling Facility

August 11 2022 9:35 AM



GRANITE CITY - Yesterday morning (August 10), a [5-alarm fire broke out](#) at Interco Trading in Granite City, creating a plume of smoke so intense that it is registering on Doppler radar. The Interco Trading facility is a “metaltronics” recycling factory that recycles several non-ferrous metals, including lithium-ion and lead acid batteries. Burning batteries releases several toxic substances, including lead and sulfuric acid, that

pose several public health and environmental risks. This is not the first time this facility has endangered the public—a [similar fire](#) happened at the facility in March 2020, and Interco was cited for Clean Air and Clean Water Act violations.

Firefighters and first responders from eight separate departments are battling the industrial fire, and the Madison Illinois Police Department issued a shelter-in-place order for residents within a one-mile radius. Residents are urged to stay indoors with their windows closed, monitor any symptoms they may experience, and heed any evacuation warnings. If local residents feel ill, they should seek attention at the nearest hospital as soon as they can do so safely.

In response, United Congregations of Metro East and Sierra Club Illinois released the following statement:

“Yet again, the Metro East community is facing a potential environmental and public health disaster as a result of decades of injustice and a lack of care for our communities,” said Zach Chike, Community Development and Youth Outreach Pastor with the City of Joy Fellowship. “While we are still working to support the families that have been displaced and the businesses that have been destroyed due to the recent devastating flooding in the Metro East, we are now facing yet another crisis. I’m concerned for the safety of my community given the potential effects the toxic chemicals released in the fire will have on our health and environment.”

“The United Congregations of Metro East is a powerful advocate for clean air and a clean environment, and the people deserve a clean and healthy environment,” said JD Dixon, Environmental Justice Organizer with United Congregations of Metro East. “We’re calling for this incident to be properly investigated. In addition, nearby residents should be checked on to ensure they aren’t facing any health issues stemming from the fire at Interco, the industrial recycling facility.”

“We are deeply concerned to see repeat fires at a facility that stores a variety of harmful wastes,” said Sonya Lunder, Senior Toxics Advisor with Sierra Club. “Illinois must make an effort to ensure metal recyclers don’t repeatedly threaten the health of their neighbors or force them to move out of environmental justice communities. Some states have passed cumulative impact laws that would block new permits for highly polluting industries to expand, rebuild, or relocate to a heavily-impacted environmental justice community. As a leader in climate justice, Illinois should do the same.”