



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

March 27, 2019

OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

The Honorable Tom Livingston
President of Village of La Grange
Post Office Box 668
La Grange, Illinois 60525

Dear Mr. Livingston:

Thank you for your January 28, 2019, letter to Administrator Wheeler of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding ethylene oxide emissions. The Administrator asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

EPA is taking a two-pronged approach to address emissions of ethylene oxide in Willowbrook, Illinois and around the country, and is committed to providing information to the public throughout the process. First, EPA is reviewing and updating Clean Air Act regulations for facilities that emit ethylene oxide. Several existing rules issued under the Clean Air Act Section 112 cover sources associated with ethylene oxide emissions. Regulatory processes are already underway for many of these rules. For example, EPA is currently reviewing its rule for the Miscellaneous Organic Chemical Manufacturing source category. The agency anticipates proposing necessary revisions to that rule in the spring of 2019, reviewing public comments submitted on that proposal, and finalizing the rule revisions in March 2020. Simultaneously, EPA is reviewing other rules associated with emissions of ethylene oxide, including commercial sterilizers, such as Sterigenics. We will release those schedules as they are determined. Second, EPA is gathering additional information on ethylene oxide emissions to both help EPA as it evaluates opportunities to reduce ethylene oxide emissions as part of its regulations review, and help the agency determine whether more immediate emission reduction steps are necessary in particular locations.

As EPA develops a better understanding of the emissions from the Sterigenics facility, we will conduct a risk assessment for the Willowbrook area. This assessment will be more comprehensive than either the National Air Toxics Assessment or the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's analysis. Specifically, it will be the type of risk assessment EPA conducts when determining whether to update industrial regulations to improve public health protection from certain industry sectors. EPA will share the results of the risk assessment in a timely manner.

To help inform this particular risk assessment, EPA prepared and is following a monitoring plan to measure the ambient concentrations of ethylene oxide in the commercial and residential areas surrounding the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook. This plan was developed with input from community leaders and based on air dispersion modeling using results of stack tests conducted at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook in September 2018 and subsequent technical analysis.

After EPA reviews the monitoring data, we post it and associated information to our dedicated website at <https://www.epa.gov/il/sterigenics-willowbrook-facility-documents>. Please continue to check this website for additional information as it becomes available.

EPA will continue to coordinate closely with state and local air agencies, and across EPA offices, as we continue to work to address ethylene oxide and protect public health across the United States.

I appreciate the opportunity to be of service and trust the information provided is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W L Wehrum', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William L. Wehrum
Assistant Administrator