



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

APR 18 2019

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

The Honorable Melinda Bush
Illinois State Senate
10 North Lake Street, Suite 112
Grayslake, Illinois 60030

Dear Ms. Bush:

Thank you for your February 21, 2019, letter to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Assistant Administrator Bill Wehrum regarding ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions in Lake County, Illinois. After receipt of your letter, we reviewed the Senate Joint Resolution you introduced concerning EtO, which I understand passed out of Senate committee last month.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) are coordinating their efforts to respond to significant EtO emissions sources in Lake County. This is the typical approach throughout EPA Region 5 and across the country, where states like Illinois effectively manage environmental issues in their states. In Lake County, EPA and IEPA have identified two facilities where we are working to reduce EtO emissions—Medline in Waukegan and Vantage Specialty Chemicals in Gurnee.

EPA is leading one part of this effort. Specifically, EPA is reviewing and updating Clean Air Act (CAA) regulations for facilities that emit EtO. Several existing rules issued under the CAA Section 112 cover sources associated with ethylene oxide emissions, and regulatory processes are already underway for many of these rules. For example, the Agency is currently reviewing its rule for the Miscellaneous Organic Chemical Manufacturing source category and anticipates proposing necessary revisions by mid-2019. At the same time, EPA is reviewing other rules associated with emissions of EtO, including commercial sterilizers, such as Medline. We anticipate proposing necessary revisions for the commercial sterilizer rule in mid-2019 as well and I will be happy to share schedules for other rules as they are determined.

IEPA is leading the other part of this effort in Lake County—assessing and reducing risk from individual EtO emissions sources on a timeline faster than national regulations can achieve. IEPA, with EPA's support, is coordinating with the facilities in Lake County to gather additional information and secure significant emission reductions as quickly as possible.

While neither EPA nor IEPA is conducting ambient monitoring in Lake County, EPA is coordinating with Lake County Health Department on the monitoring they are planning and providing technical assistance. The agencies are also using a variety of tools, such as air dispersion modeling, to better characterize potential risks near the Lake County facilities.

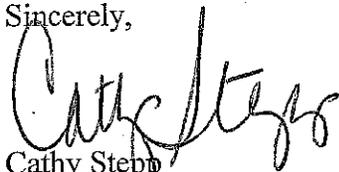
This additional information will help IEPA and EPA evaluate opportunities to reduce ethylene oxide emissions and determine whether more immediate emission reduction steps are necessary.

We will continue to work closely with IEPA to address environmental issues in Lake County; this includes working with the State to provide opportunities to keep the community informed. For example, IEPA expects Medline to submit a revised construction permit application. If so, IEPA will hold a public outreach session on the proposed permit conditions, including any required emission controls. EPA is maintaining a website about EtO emissions in Lake County, and will be working with IEPA to ensure coordination: <https://www.epa.gov/il/addressing-ethylene-oxide-emissions-lake-county-illinois>.

We also are committed to keeping the lines of communication open with you and other elected officials.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Ronna Beckmann, Region 5 Intergovernmental Liaison, at (312) 886-3000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Stepp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Cathy Stepp
Regional Administrator