

WEBVTT

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00:01:07.980 --> 00:01:08.820
Debora Browning: Good evening,

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00:01:09.120 --> 00:01:11.370
Debora Browning: and welcome to the Ethylene Oxide

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00:01:11.610 --> 00:01:15.120
Debora Browning: EtO Zoom community meeting for Evonik

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00:01:15.240 --> 00:01:24.720
Debora Browning: Corporation in Reserve, Louisiana. My name is Debora Browning with EPA, and I'm the moderator for the evening. Next slide, please.

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00:01:27.240 --> 00:01:45.210
Debora Browning: For those attendees requiring language interpretation services, instructions are posted on the screen. This will assist our participants to enable the appropriate language preference for English or Spanish services. I would like to welcome and introduce our Spanish interpreters,

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00:01:45.630 --> 00:02:06.210
Debora Browning: Xiomara Crespo and Nestor Lima. For those requiring American sign language services, the interpreter window is available to pin the interpreter on the screen. I would like to welcome and introduce the American Sign Language interpreters, Karen Evans and Corey Langridge. Next slide, please.

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00:02:14.070 --> 00:02:17.160
Debora Browning: At the end of our presentations, EPA will address

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00:02:17.640 --> 00:02:30.750
Debora Browning: questions during the question-and-answer session service, excuse me. This is a Zoom meeting and due to the size of the audience, all participants are in listening mode only - except for the speakers' microphones.

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00:02:31.380 --> 00:02:47.640
Debora Browning: At the end of the presentation, EPA will address questions during the question/answer session. Participants may write their question in the chat box during the presentations. However, the questions will not be answered until the Q&A session. Next slide, please.

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00:02:51.330 --> 00:03:02.910

Debora Browning: Your comments are very important to us, and this meeting is focused on hearing from the citizens in the Reserve area, near the Evonik Corporation facility. Any questions related to industry

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00:03:02.910 --> 00:03:13.560

Debora Browning: permits, any enforcement, including inspections and surveillances or legal actions or about other areas or facilities, will not be addressed during this meeting.

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00:03:13.980 --> 00:03:28.740

Debora Browning: You may send these questions or other questions and comments related to ethylene oxide, to the EPA Region 6 email box for a response at R6EthyleneOxide@epa.gov.

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00:03:29.820 --> 00:03:38.700

Debora Browning: This email address will be posted in the chat box shortly. This event is being recorded and will be posted to the EPA Region 6

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00:03:38.700 --> 00:03:43.320

Debora Browning: websites for Ethylene Oxide. These web links will also be posted in

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00:03:43.320 --> 00:03:43.710

Debora Browning: the chat

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00:03:43.740 --> 00:03:49.410

Debora Browning: box as an announcement on the right side of your monitor screen. Next slide, please.

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00:03:52.470 --> 00:04:02.280

Debora Browning: For Zoom meeting best practices during the Q&A session, in addition to encouraging everyone to writing their questions in the chat box, you may raise your hand to ask a question.

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00:04:02.760 --> 00:04:11.550

Debora Browning: Those participants dialing in will have also have an opportunity to ask a question during the Q&A session. When not speaking, please mute your microphone.

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00:04:12.120 --> 00:04:23.310

Debora Browning: If you would like to send a question to be read in the chat box, but prefer to remain anonymous, you may do so through a private chat box. On the screen, you will see your select message

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00:04:23.340 --> 00:04:34.200

Debora Browning: option and select "direct message" to Janetta Coats. My colleague Janetta Coats will be assisting me with the Q&A session. Next slide, please.

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00:04:36.390 --> 00:04:43.230

Debora Browning: This slide shows an example of where to find the mute button in the buttons at the bottom of your screen for the chat box and to raise your hand.

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00:04:44.520 --> 00:04:45.720

Debora Browning: Next slide please.

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00:04:48.210 --> 00:05:00.270

Debora Browning: EPA would like to welcome our Louisiana Congressional delegation, state and local offices, and the environmental justice stakeholders, along with members of the community attending and participating in this meeting.

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00:05:01.380 --> 00:05:10.590

Debora Browning: EPA would like to introduce Gabrielle Howard, legislative assistant for Congressman Troy Carter, Louisiana District 2, for comments.

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00:05:12.570 --> 00:05:21.330

Gabrielle Howard: Good evening everybody, thank you for having me, as was stated, I, my name is Gabrielle Howard, and I am the legislative assistant for Congressman Troy Carter,

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00:05:21.690 --> 00:05:29.550

Gabrielle Howard: covering energy and the environment. And I just wanted to say that the Congressman and his office is dedicated to working with EPA,

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00:05:29.910 --> 00:05:36.930

Gabrielle Howard: industry, and community members to ensure the health and safety of everybody living in Louisiana's second Congressional district.

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00:05:37.500 --> 00:05:47.040

Gabrielle Howard: And we are excited that we've all come together for this meeting, and definitely look forward to continuing to work together and listening to what everyone has to say. Thank you.

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00:05:50.820 --> 00:05:56.940

Debora Browning: Thank you, Miss Howard. At this time, I would like to introduce EPA environmental justice representatives.

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00:05:57.270 --> 00:06:10.470

Debora Browning: We have with us tonight Matt Tejada, EPA headquarters Director of the Office of Environmental Justice, Jonna Polk EPA Region 6 Director of the Office of Communities, Tribes, and Environmental Assessment,

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00:06:10.890 --> 00:06:20.490

Debora Browning: and Gloria Vaughn, EPA Region 6 Associate Director for Environmental Justice. Jonna, can you go ahead and unmute your mic and provide general comments?

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00:06:21.570 --> 00:06:34.470

JPOLK03: Thank you Debora. Good evening. As Debora said, I'm Jonna Polk and I serve as the Director for EPA Region 6's Office of Communities, Tribes, and Environmental Assessment.

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00:06:34.980 --> 00:06:47.040

JPOLK03: I want to thank you for your time and participation this evening as EPA shares information concerning ethylene oxide emissions, ethylene oxide risks to human health,

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00:06:47.550 --> 00:06:58.770

JPOLK03: and provides an opportunity for you to ask questions. We're very interested in the community's questions and concerns and we want to make sure that you have every opportunity

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00:06:59.130 --> 00:07:04.920

JPOLK03: this evening to express those concerns, and for us to hopefully answer your questions.

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00:07:05.670 --> 00:07:18.900

JPOLK03: We had hoped to share this important information with community members in person, but continue to be a protective of everyone during this pandemic, so we are holding meetings virtually.

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00:07:19.410 --> 00:07:37.440

JPOLK03: I hope that you and your families are safe and we look forward to the time when we can safely gather again. My special thank you this evening to a group of community stakeholders from Texas and Louisiana who expressed their ethylene oxide concerns to EPA -

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00:07:38.580 --> 00:07:39.570

JPOLK03: Excuse me.

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00:07:40.800 --> 00:07:55.680

JPOLK03: Lost my video there, um. My special thank you this evening to a group of community stakeholders from Texas and Louisiana who expressed their ethylene oxide concerns to EPA's administrator.

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00:07:56.340 --> 00:08:16.410

JPOLK03: This past spring, EPA invited this group of stakeholders to work with us to improve outreach to communities concerning ethylene oxide. They provided recommendations on how to remove language barriers, provide meeting notices, and improve communication materials.

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00:08:18.300 --> 00:08:30.420

JPOLK03: The stakeholder group also recommended community participation in these meetings, so this evening we appreciate Ms. Mary Hampton and Mr. Bobby Taylor. We had a few

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00:08:31.680 --> 00:08:44.070

JPOLK03: technical challenges before the meeting, so hope that they're going to be able to be on, but we're expecting them. We- we want to express our appreciation to them for joining us from the community.

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00:08:44.490 --> 00:08:53.010

JPOLK03: They will speak following EPA's presentation this evening. Again, thank you for your time and participation this evening.

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00:08:53.400 --> 00:09:00.720

JPOLK03: With the community stakeholders, we have a common goal of providing you the best information in the best manner.

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00:09:01.380 --> 00:09:14.310

JPOLK03: We have had some of our stakeholders also express concern that our community members may be uncomfortable identifying themselves when they ask questions. And so rather than

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00:09:14.820 --> 00:09:21.180

JPOLK03: everyone putting their, their um, questions in the chat box, which you certainly can, and identify yourself that's-

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00:09:21.510 --> 00:09:31.200

JPOLK03: that's perfectly fine. But we've added the option this evening of the private message, and again, um Debora, as she introduced, everyone

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00:09:31.740 --> 00:09:42.150

JPOLK03: went through that process and- and, if you would direct those to Janetta Coats, Ms. Coats will share the questions at the end of the- end of the meeting and

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00:09:42.990 --> 00:09:53.790

JPOLK03: your question will be- be posed without identifying yourself, and so we just want to make sure that everybody's comfortable asking their questions.

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00:09:54.300 --> 00:10:02.640

JPOLK03: So I would with that, I would like to introduce your very strong community advocate in our office, Gloria Vaughn,

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00:10:02.970 --> 00:10:14.730

JPOLK03: Associate Director for Environmental Justice, who I'm sure many of you may already know through her tireless efforts in getting information to communities. So Gloria, I'll just turn it over to you, thank you.

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00:10:20.430 --> 00:10:21.300

Gloria Vaughn: Thank you Jonna.

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00:10:25.950 --> 00:10:36.990

Gloria Vaughn: As Jonna said, I'm Gloria Vaughn, Associate Director for Environmental Justice in the Office of Communities, Tribes, and Environmental Assessment in EPA regional office, regional office in Region 6.

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00:10:38.070 --> 00:10:50.250

Gloria Vaughn: I do want to thank everyone who has, especially our roundtable stakeholders who have given us so much valuable information that is helping us to craft these movements as we go forward.

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00:10:51.720 --> 00:10:56.910

Gloria Vaughn: I have been, I have been fortunate to meet and/or talk with some of you who are attending this community meeting.

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00:10:57.660 --> 00:11:06.210

Gloria Vaughn: For those who I have not met, my name- my name may be familiar to you because I'm the person who sends you notices for grant opportunities,

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00:11:07.020 --> 00:11:19.080

Gloria Vaughn: training opportunities, meeting invitations, opportunities to commit- comment on NEPA related projects, and I'm your contact with issues that you want to bring to EPA's attention.

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00:11:20.280 --> 00:11:25.350

Gloria Vaughn: We appreciate your time and the sacrifices that you have made to attend this meeting.

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00:11:26.430 --> 00:11:45.870

Gloria Vaughn: Please reach out to me if you have further suggestions for making these meetings better. I will place my contact information in the chat box. For those of you who are calling by phone, you can also reach me by phone at 2146657535.

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00:11:47.160 --> 00:11:48.990

Gloria Vaughn: Your feedback is important.

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00:11:50.220 --> 00:11:57.570

Gloria Vaughn: Thank you for attending tonight's meeting and I will hand the meeting back to Jonna who will, who will provide for the details.

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00:11:58.890 --> 00:12:05.700

JPOLK03: Thank you Gloria, and I would encourage folks to reach out to Gloria if you have any further questions after the meeting.

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00:12:06.240 --> 00:12:18.360

JPOLK03: She is very helpful and we're just fortunate to be able to work with her, she genuinely cares about communities and so we're happy that she's- she's here to help, so don't hesitate to reach out to her.

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00:12:18.870 --> 00:12:29.520

JPOLK03: I'm really pleased to introduce Matt Tejada this evening; he is our Director for the Office of Environmental Justice in-

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00:12:30.180 --> 00:12:44.910

JPOLK03: in Washington, D.C., at our headquarters. Um, Matt certainly represents our administrator, um Administrator Regan and- and shares those same priorities for

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00:12:45.330 --> 00:12:54.150

JPOLK03: communities, an interest in in protecting communities, protecting the public, and our- our new administrator has made it very clear that that's

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00:12:54.510 --> 00:13:06.060

JPOLK03: the highest priority for him. And I know that Matt expresses that very well, and so I'm very pleased to have Matt with us this evening, and it really demonstrates, I believe

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00:13:06.810 --> 00:13:21.360

JPOLK03: our agency's commitment to communities and making sure that they get the valuable information they need, um concerning risks in their communities. So I will turn it over to Matt and thank you Matt, again, for being with us this evening.

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00:13:22.350 --> 00:13:24.540

Matthew Tejada: Absolutely, thanks so much Jenna.

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00:13:25.710 --> 00:13:40.140

Matthew Tejada: Hello everyone, thanks to everyone who's joining us this evening. I know it is tough even- even in just these virtual meetings to be taking time away from, for some folks, from your families,

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00:13:40.860 --> 00:13:53.070

Matthew Tejada: from your other loved ones, from your work, to join these sorts of conversations, to give us the sort of feedback we need in order to make decisions that are really focused on

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00:13:53.550 --> 00:14:00.540

Matthew Tejada: what are the needs of the most impacted communities across the United States, and I just want to emphasize what- what Jenna was sharing.

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00:14:01.290 --> 00:14:16.140

Matthew Tejada: With this administrator, with- with Michael Regan leading EPA, we're- we're- we're in a new era, an unprecedented era of centering the emission of the agency on environmental justice.

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00:14:16.650 --> 00:14:30.360

Matthew Tejada: And what that means, to me at least, is we- we have emerged from a long history of advancing environmental justice when we can, when we could,

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00:14:31.140 --> 00:14:42.630

Matthew Tejada: when we have 5% of our time left at the end of a process or at the end of our day to think about environmental justice, to a time where we start

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00:14:43.140 --> 00:15:00.720

Matthew Tejada: from considering environmental justice as one of the first things we think about to make sure that we really understand what are the realities of the most impacted communities with environmental justice challenges across the United States.

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00:15:02.220 --> 00:15:05.310

Matthew Tejada: And then from there that that reality

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00:15:05.670 --> 00:15:07.260

Matthew Tejada: and our understanding of it

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00:15:07.440 --> 00:15:19.830

Matthew Tejada: in our responsiveness and transparency with members of those impacted communities to infuse and drive everything that comes after that. From

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00:15:20.670 --> 00:15:29.130

Matthew Tejada: how else we engage, from what science we look at, from how we consider what sorts of options we have and the decisions we make

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00:15:29.730 --> 00:15:42.180

Matthew Tejada: to really make sure that we're centered on environmental justice. And that's the point of tonight. As some of you may know, and I see some folks here who have been at some of the other meetings,

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00:15:45.210 --> 00:15:50.850

Matthew Tejada: this is an issue that is a national priority for EPA.

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00:15:52.080 --> 00:16:03.450

Matthew Tejada: It's an issue which is not brand new to us, but it's certainly evolving in terms of our understanding of the importance of the impacts from ethylene oxide.

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00:16:04.050 --> 00:16:17.550

Matthew Tejada: And even though it is a- an issue that mostly impacts just a number of communities around the United States and a lot of those along the Gulf coast in areas like Texas and Louisiana,

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00:16:20.340 --> 00:16:22.050

Matthew Tejada: that doesn't matter because

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00:16:23.670 --> 00:16:38.610

Matthew Tejada: we really understand that, from the earliest days when we started to understand exactly what the impacts of this chemical are and trying to really pin down the science and- and communicate that science,

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00:16:39.660 --> 00:16:42.540

Matthew Tejada: that caused a lot of concern, and rightfully so.

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00:16:44.070 --> 00:16:51.570

Matthew Tejada: Nobody wants to find out that some chemical that you've been exposed to or potentially exposed to,

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00:16:52.260 --> 00:17:07.200

Matthew Tejada: some chemical that that kids might be breathing that is affecting the health and safety and future of your families, that suddenly it's something that we're concerned about and that we want to take steps to address.

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00:17:08.550 --> 00:17:23.580

Matthew Tejada: So that's really why we've made sure across EPA, not just in Louisiana, but across EPA, that we're engaging with the communities most impacted by ethylene oxide so that we can hear directly from you.

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00:17:24.270 --> 00:17:34.530

Matthew Tejada: So we can hear what your concerns are, so that we can appreciate the impact that this has had on your lives, on the lives of your family members.

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00:17:35.370 --> 00:17:44.490

Matthew Tejada: So, again, we greatly appreciate folks taking the time tonight to visit with us to hear some information here in a minute

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00:17:45.150 --> 00:18:06.210

Matthew Tejada: which we hope, and we've been trying really hard to make sure this information is- is helpful to y'all, that that you can understand where we are in not only the process around thinking about how do we handle this chemical, but- but our evolving understanding of the science at times.

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00:18:07.320 --> 00:18:13.260

Matthew Tejada: So we really want to focus on that tonight. I know we have a lot of folks here from-

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00:18:13.770 --> 00:18:22.530

Matthew Tejada: from environmental groups and some of the big environmental groups, or from law schools, or from the private sector from business and industry.

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00:18:23.010 --> 00:18:34.110

Matthew Tejada: And we really appreciate everyone's attention and commitment to engaging and learning and telling us about your thoughts on this.

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00:18:35.010 --> 00:18:50.880

Matthew Tejada: But we really want to focus tonight on hearing from members of the community, so please if folks would just remember that as we get into some periods where we'll- where we'll take questions or engage on the questions offered in chat,

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00:18:52.590 --> 00:18:56.640

Matthew Tejada: that we're really looking to start with community members,

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00:18:57.660 --> 00:19:06.090

Matthew Tejada: not just because their realities and their concerns are the ones we're most interested here, especially since

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00:19:06.990 --> 00:19:13.260

Matthew Tejada: we realize it's the greatest sacrifice for y'all to take the time to give us that sort of feedback.

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00:19:13.980 --> 00:19:28.920

Matthew Tejada: But because that's the feedback we need to live up to, what the administrator has set out before us in terms of centering our mission on environmental justice. That means centering it on what y'all need and what your experience is,

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00:19:29.970 --> 00:19:35.520

Matthew Tejada: what your realities are. So again, thank y'all so much, we look forward to hearing from y'all.

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00:19:36.780 --> 00:19:42.630

Matthew Tejada: If other folks could please honor that and respect that and- and let's- let's, let us have,

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00:19:43.080 --> 00:19:55.950

Matthew Tejada: as is right, the community folks speak first and offer their questions, offer their concerns, offer their perspectives, and- and hopefully at the end we'll have some time for other folks,

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00:19:56.490 --> 00:20:08.460

Matthew Tejada: maybe to help answer some of those questions if they have information or perspective or- or just to share your own perspectives on ethylene oxide and- and where we are in regulating this chemical in the United States.

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00:20:10.440 --> 00:20:16.350

Matthew Tejada: But, but with that, I think we'll pass it back over to Jonna and- and get it on. I think we're- we're going to have

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00:20:16.740 --> 00:20:24.090

Matthew Tejada: quite a bit of information, which again we've been working really hard to make sure that information is- is meaningful and useful.

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00:20:24.660 --> 00:20:39.720

Matthew Tejada: Hopefully, we'll answer a lot of folks' questions before you have to ask them, but, of course, if any of that information is unclear or if there are other things that we don't speak to or just other concerns you have around ethylene oxide,

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00:20:41.070 --> 00:20:57.030

Matthew Tejada: that- Again, that's the purpose tonight and that's the thing that we really want to focus on. So thank you all for being here to make this meeting as successful and as meaningful to us to be able to respond to your concerns and your realities going forward.

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00:20:59.580 --> 00:21:09.210

JPOLK03: Matt, thank you so much for really expressing our priorities and our goals this evening so very well, really appreciate it.

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00:21:10.470 --> 00:21:21.870

JPOLK03: I can tell that really comes from your heart and that's- that's how we feel. So thank you so much. I will turn it back over to Debora and our moderator. Thanks, Debora. Thanks, Matt.

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00:21:24.330 --> 00:21:36.000

Debora Browning: Thank you Jonna, Gloria, and Matt. Now I would like to introduce David Garcia, EPA Region 6 Director for the Air and Radiation Division, for opening comments.

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00:21:41.880 --> 00:21:50.340

dgarcia: Thank you Debora, thank you Matt, and thank you, John. And thank you, everybody. Thanks everybody for joining us today. As Debora stated, my name is David Garcia.

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00:21:50.910 --> 00:21:56.670

dgarcia: I am the Director of the Air and Radiation Division here at EPA in the Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas.

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00:21:57.300 --> 00:22:07.770

dgarcia: EPA is presenting this community meeting on potential risk associated with emissions of ethylene oxide from the Evonik Corporation in Reserve, Louisiana.

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00:22:08.490 --> 00:22:22.410

dgarcia: We will provide information on the current estimated risk from emissions of ethylene oxide from this facility, what actions Evonik has completed since 2014 until 2020,

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00:22:23.250 --> 00:22:36.030

dgarcia: and what EPA is planning to do to regulate this air toxics. Ethylene oxide is a significant building block for many useful everyday consumer products and is used as a sterilizer for medical equipment.

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00:22:36.540 --> 00:22:51.510

dgarcia: During our periodic review of risk from air toxics chemicals, EPA determined that ethylene oxide presents a greater potential risk for getting cancer through inhalation or breathing routes of exposure.

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00:22:52.170 --> 00:23:06.750

dgarcia: However, across the nation, the total emissions of air toxics pollutants are declining and air quality monitoring data show that concentrations of individual air toxics pollutants in the air are trending downward.

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00:23:07.440 --> 00:23:13.710

dgarcia: Despite these trends, some local areas are facing challenges from ethylene oxide emissions.

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00:23:14.970 --> 00:23:30.690

dgarcia: In 2014, and based on the latest National Air Toxics Assessment, ethylene oxide significantly contributed to potential elevated cancer risk in less than 1% of the census tracts across United States.

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00:23:31.320 --> 00:23:34.770

dgarcia: One of these census tracts is in Reserve, Louisiana.

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00:23:35.520 --> 00:23:45.000

dgarcia: EPA has started reviewing some of the industrial sector air toxics regulations that either use ethylene oxide or in them - or in the process,

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00:23:45.300 --> 00:23:51.420

dgarcia: or they even produce ethylene oxide emissions through their chemical production process.

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00:23:52.170 --> 00:24:05.250

dgarcia: In the future, as part of our regulatory development process, we anticipate that you and other public stakeholders will have opportunities to provide your comments and feedback to EPA

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00:24:05.610 --> 00:24:20.940

dgarcia: during the regulatory process as updates to air toxics rules are considered, and we welcome those comments. Community outreach in ethylene oxide is a critical issue for EPA Administrator Michael Regan.

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00:24:22.260 --> 00:24:28.860

dgarcia: We will be addressing your questions after the presentation by EPA and by a couple of community advocates.

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00:24:29.550 --> 00:24:39.960

dgarcia: If time permits, Evonik will present their actions to control ethylene oxide emissions since 2014. We appreciate you taking the time this evening.

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00:24:40.680 --> 00:24:56.220

dgarcia: With that said, allow me to introduce Miss Frances Verhalen, Chief of the Region 6 Air Monitoring and Grants section. She will provide more details on potential risk from ethylene oxide in Reserve, Louisiana. Thank you.

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00:25:02.220 --> 00:25:03.060

Fran Verhalen: Thank you, David.

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00:25:05.550 --> 00:25:06.240

Fran Verhalen: Good evening.

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00:25:07.500 --> 00:25:25.020

Fran Verhalen: My name is Frances Verhalen. I'm a supervisor for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the Dallas office. I will be speaking on the risks posed by ethylene oxide emissions from the Evonik Corporation facility in Reserve, Louisiana.

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00:25:28.320 --> 00:25:34.500

Fran Verhalen: Tonight's discussion is specific to ethylene oxide emissions from this facility.

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00:25:35.670 --> 00:25:47.190

Fran Verhalen: I'm focusing on providing you information on ethylene oxide uses, the health effects from breathing ethylene oxide (both short-term and long-term risks),

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00:25:48.720 --> 00:25:56.370

Fran Verhalen: information on what the facility has done to update its information on emissions of ethylene oxide,

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00:25:58.080 --> 00:26:10.830

Fran Verhalen: EPA's conclusions after reviewing updated technical information and the risk modeled for the facility, and more accurate information provided by the company and LDEQ.

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00:26:14.580 --> 00:26:15.690

Fran Verhalen: Ethylene oxide

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00:26:15.750 --> 00:26:33.900

Fran Verhalen: exists at room temperature as a colorless gas. It is flammable, meaning it can burn. It is a chemical component in making other chemicals and is a component for common household products like detergents or carpet.

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00:26:35.820 --> 00:26:53.190

Fran Verhalen: It is a sterilizing agent for materials that cannot be heated or gotten wet. For example, ethylene oxide sterilizes tubing used in hospitals for medical procedures and the masks and gowns worn by doctors and nurses.

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00:26:54.990 --> 00:27:05.730

Fran Verhalen: While ethylene oxide has many uses, EPA has determined that it is a carcinogen, meaning that exposure to this air toxic can cause cancer.

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00:27:10.110 --> 00:27:24.270

Fran Verhalen: In recent years, EPA has learned more about the health risks from breathing air that contains ethylene oxide over a lifetime, but there is a lot about ethylene oxide that we still do not know.

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00:27:25.890 --> 00:27:36.210

Fran Verhalen: One of the questions we are examining is whether ethylene oxide is in the air broadly across the United States, and if it is, at what levels.

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00:27:38.190 --> 00:27:49.290

Fran Verhalen: We began examining this particular question after monitoring studies of ethylene oxide in the air near an industrial facility in Illinois in 2018 and 2019.

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00:27:50.910 --> 00:28:00.960

Fran Verhalen: We found it at monitors downwind of the facility, which we expected because the wind carries ethylene oxide from a facility toward the monitors.

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00:28:02.310 --> 00:28:15.270

Fran Verhalen: But the studies also detected ethylene oxide at lower levels at the monitors upwind of the facility, indicating the possibility that background ethylene oxide exists.

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00:28:17.520 --> 00:28:26.910

Fran Verhalen: A second question we have is if we are actually measuring ethylene oxide or if we're measuring a different chemical that acts like ethylene oxide.

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00:28:28.320 --> 00:28:41.190

Fran Verhalen: EPA has found concentrations of ethylene oxide in the outdoor air that are not clearly linked to a particular industrial facility such as a chemical plant or sterilized commercial sterilizer.

148

00:28:42.870 --> 00:28:47.310

Fran Verhalen: We do not yet know where the ethylene oxide is coming from.

149

00:28:48.960 --> 00:29:04.890

Fran Verhalen: The scientists and engineers at EPA continue to study and research multiple things that can contribute to ethylene oxide concentrations to better understand where the ethylene oxide is coming from.

150

00:29:07.380 --> 00:29:18.570

Fran Verhalen: EPA has sampled the air in both urban and rural cities across the nation to monitor the concentrations of air toxics, including ethylene oxide.

151

00:29:20.190 --> 00:29:35.130

Fran Verhalen: While these lower levels of ethylene oxide suggest there is a background level of ethylene oxide in the outdoor air, EPA is not yet certain about exact background concentrations and levels.

152

00:29:36.840 --> 00:29:39.660

Fran Verhalen: Regardless of where the ethylene oxide comes from,

153

00:29:40.920 --> 00:29:52.980

Fran Verhalen: inhalation of ethylene oxide above certain concentrations may harm or negatively impact a person's health through continuing exposure over one's lifetime.

154

00:29:57.840 --> 00:30:09.150

Fran Verhalen: I am here tonight to tell you about potential health risks associated with air emissions of ethylene oxide from the Evonik Corporation facility in Reserve, Louisiana.

155

00:30:10.410 --> 00:30:25.200

Fran Verhalen: I use the term "potential cancer risk" because each of us is unique in our reaction to cancer-causing agents, and we may not get cancer from the same exposure as our neighbor.

156

00:30:30.360 --> 00:30:40.830

Fran Verhalen: When we, the scientists at EPA, discuss health risks, we focus on both short-term risk and long-term (or lifetime) risk.

157

00:30:42.180 --> 00:30:50.010

Fran Verhalen: Tonight I'm focusing on risks from breathing air toxics. You may hear this called "inhalation risk."

158

00:30:52.650 --> 00:30:57.600

Fran Verhalen: Short-term risks are those potential risks that impact quickly.

159

00:30:58.740 --> 00:31:00.810

Fran Verhalen: You may hear this called "acute risk."

160

00:31:02.070 --> 00:31:10.560

Fran Verhalen: For ethylene oxide, we associate this risk with workers who come into high concentrations of ethylene oxide.

161

00:31:11.910 --> 00:31:21.540

Fran Verhalen: Short-term inhalation exposure of workers to high levels of ethylene oxide has resulted in serious physical effects.

162

00:31:23.070 --> 00:31:32.610

Fran Verhalen: For you living in the community near the Evonik Corporation, this situation or type of risk is not likely or probable.

163

00:31:35.190 --> 00:31:44.730

Fran Verhalen: Long-term risks are potential risks that may develop over years of exposure, you may know this as "chronic risk."

164

00:31:46.590 --> 00:32:11.100

Fran Verhalen: Long-term effects from breathing air, from breathing in lower concentrations of ethylene oxide for multiple years, can but do not always include: cancer; irritation of the eyes, skin, and respiratory passages; and effects to the nervous system such as headaches or memory loss.

165

00:32:14.160 --> 00:32:28.770

Fran Verhalen: The scientists at EPA have determined that a long-term or lifetime exposure of about 70 years to ethylene oxide increases the estimated risk of developing certain cancers.

166

00:32:33.510 --> 00:32:40.050

Fran Verhalen: Let me start with an explanation about what the potential increased cancer risk means.

167

00:32:42.090 --> 00:33:01.410

Fran Verhalen: EPA discusses increased cancer risk as a comparison of the number of people at risk of developing cancer. For every 1 million cases, you may hear it as a potential risk of 10-in-a-million or 100-in-a-million.

168

00:33:02.820 --> 00:33:10.050

Fran Verhalen: This risk is in addition to the chances of developing cancer for other reasons.

169

00:33:12.840 --> 00:33:18.360

Fran Verhalen: This slide shows emissions for ethylene oxide for 2014 and

-

170

00:33:20.070 --> 00:33:25.800

Fran Verhalen: and the associated risk estimates for Evonik in Reserve.

171

00:33:27.450 --> 00:33:45.750

Fran Verhalen: Using the 2014 emissions inventory information in EPA's National Air Toxics Assessments model, EPA estimated the potential increased cancer risk in the Reserve area from ethylene oxide to be over 800 cases in 1 million.

172

00:33:46.830 --> 00:33:53.880

Fran Verhalen: And EPA determined that the ethylene oxide emissions were from the Evonik Corporation facility.

173

00:33:55.650 --> 00:34:12.360

Fran Verhalen: We at EPA consider excess cancer risks that are estimated to be above 100 in 1 million as "not sufficiently protective of human health" and in need of further evaluation to address this concern.

174

00:34:13.650 --> 00:34:23.370

Fran Verhalen: This is one of the reasons we are here tonight, to tell you that there is an increased risk of developing cancer from breathing ethylene oxide.

175

00:34:25.830 --> 00:34:26.910

Fran Verhalen: Using Evonik's 2018

176

00:34:28.020 --> 00:34:37.890

Fran Verhalen: emissions inventory information, EPA found that the potential risk in increased cancer risk to be 600 cases in 1 million.

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00:34:38.940 --> 00:34:49.800

Fran Verhalen: This risk has decreased since 2014, but remains at levels that EPA has determined to not be sufficiently protective of human health.

178

00:34:52.260 --> 00:35:13.290

Fran Verhalen: EPA uses actual annual emissions for a specific year to develop the estimated lifetime risk. Because the amount of annual emissions may change based on a facility's use of ethylene oxide, the associated risk continues to change.

179

00:35:15.000 --> 00:35:26.040

Fran Verhalen: For 2020, Evonik worked to control the amount of ethylene oxide emitted, and reduced emissions by an additional 5% compared to the

180

00:35:27.150 --> 00:35:27.990

Fran Verhalen: 2018 emissions.

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00:35:29.850 --> 00:35:44.190

Fran Verhalen: Please note that EPA uses actually emissions for a specific year to develop the estimated lifetime risk. Thus, the risk continues to change as the actual emissions change.

182

00:35:48.630 --> 00:35:58.740

Fran Verhalen: In 2016, EPA published the Integrated Risk Information System, or 'IRIS' assessment, for ethylene oxide.

183

00:35:59.970 --> 00:36:09.750

Fran Verhalen: This risk assessment underwent two rounds of public comment and two rounds of peer reviewed by EPA's Scientific Advisory Board.

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00:36:10.980 --> 00:36:14.610

Fran Verhalen: EPA stands behind the ethylene oxide IRIS value.

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00:36:15.810 --> 00:36:16.380

Fran Verhalen: However,

186

00:36:16.800 --> 00:36:17.580

1225***748: you may hear

187

00:36:17.610 --> 00:36:20.130

Fran Verhalen: different views this evening about the risk.

188

00:36:21.330 --> 00:36:22.530

1225***748: I'm not here tonight

189

00:36:22.650 --> 00:36:23.310

Fran Verhalen: to debate

190

00:36:23.370 --> 00:36:31.620

Fran Verhalen: the different risk values, but rather to explain the risks based on EPA's latest scientific assessment.

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00:36:32.670 --> 00:36:34.500

Fran Verhalen: Suggestions to consider

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00:36:34.590 --> 00:36:35.520

Fran Verhalen: risk values

193

00:36:35.610 --> 00:36:36.810

Fran Verhalen: other than the IRIS

194

00:36:37.140 --> 00:36:38.910

Fran Verhalen: will be addressed by EPA

195

00:36:39.210 --> 00:36:43.620

Fran Verhalen: at a later time through our formal agency process.

196

00:36:46.950 --> 00:36:58.050

Fran Verhalen: In developing our risk number for breathing ethylene oxide, EPA chooses to be protective and conservative. We based the increased.

197

00:36:58.620 --> 00:37:20.970

Fran Verhalen: estimated risk of possibly contracting cancer on someone breathing air with ethylene oxide in it at the same concentration every day for 24 hours a day for 70 years. It does not mean that it will take 70 years to develop cancer. It could be less or more time.

198

00:37:23.070 --> 00:37:32.430

Fran Verhalen: We do not expect a one-time or short-term exposure of low amounts of ethylene oxide to cause immediate harm to a person's health.

199

00:37:36.240 --> 00:37:57.480

Fran Verhalen: We found that a long-term exposure, that is a lifetime or about 70 years exposure to ethylene oxide, increases the potential risk of certain cancers including non-Hodgkin lymphoma, myeloma, and lymphocytic leukemia.

200

00:37:58.800 --> 00:38:07.440

Fran Verhalen: Some studies also conclude that long-term exposure to ethylene oxide may increase the risk of breast cancer.

201

00:38:11.100 --> 00:38:13.770

Fran Verhalen: The EPA used the human exposure model in 2018

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00:38:15.270 --> 00:38:20.400

Fran Verhalen: to perform the risk assessments for sources emitting air toxics to the air.

203

00:38:22.170 --> 00:38:26.430

Fran Verhalen: This model only addresses the inhalation exposure.

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00:38:27.450 --> 00:38:44.610

Fran Verhalen: It is designed to predict estimated risks associated with chemicals emitted into the air, that is air toxics released into the air that move beyond a facilities boundary and remain in the vicinity of the facility.

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00:38:46.050 --> 00:38:59.250

Fran Verhalen: In this case, we used the emissions and facility information from Evonik Corporation and the random model to predict the estimated risk from this facility.

206

00:39:00.750 --> 00:39:12.780

Fran Verhalen: The results of the human exposure model provide estimates of potential cancer risk and non-cancer hazards for the chemicals evaluated in the model.

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00:39:14.490 --> 00:39:24.750

Fran Verhalen: The actual health of an individual and one's likelihood of developing cancer may be affected by other factors.

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00:39:26.100 --> 00:39:39.150

Fran Verhalen: Examples of this include how long a person is exposed to an air toxic, what their regular routines normally are, and what air toxics a person is exposed to.

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00:39:41.190 --> 00:39:55.440

Fran Verhalen: More information can be found at W-W-W dot E-P-A dot gov forward slash F-E-R-A

210

00:39:56.460 --> 00:40:12.300

Fran Verhalen: forward slash risk dash assessment dash and dash modeling dash human dash exposure dash model dash H-E-M.

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00:40:18.510 --> 00:40:20.610

Fran Verhalen: The Evonik Corporation is located

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00:40:21.780 --> 00:40:27.990

Fran Verhalen: on West 19th Street in Reserve, Louisiana, north of the Mississippi River.

213

00:40:29.580 --> 00:40:42.270

Fran Verhalen: As EPA began updating information from 2014 to 2020, we initiated discussions with Evonik and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (or 'LDEQ').

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00:40:43.590 --> 00:40:43.740

Fran Verhalen: In 2019,

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00:40:45.300 --> 00:40:57.390

Fran Verhalen: LDEQ spoke with Evonik asking for updates on controls of ethylene oxide emissions since 2014 and requesting voluntary reductions of ethylene oxide emissions.

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00:40:58.830 --> 00:41:18.510

Fran Verhalen: In March of 2021, EPA and LDEQ spoke with Evonik to discuss facility efforts to reduce reported ethylene oxide emissions. Evonik provided updated facility information and addressed additional questions from both EPA and LDEQ.

217

00:41:25.740 --> 00:41:33.030

Fran Verhalen: Evonik reported that they had reduced emissions from their fugitive sources and their point sources.

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00:41:34.800 --> 00:41:46.380

Fran Verhalen: Fugitive source emissions are gases from leaks or unplanned releases that cannot be treated with emission control equipment such as a scrubber or vent.

219

00:41:48.120 --> 00:41:54.690

Fran Verhalen: Point source emissions are gases from large stationary sources such as a flare or stack.

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00:41:55.710 --> 00:42:01.440

Fran Verhalen: These sources typically are equipped with engineering controls for those emissions.

221

00:42:03.600 --> 00:42:12.870

Fran Verhalen: Evonik uses a defined leak detection and repair program to reduce emissions from processing equipment leaks.

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00:42:14.100 --> 00:42:24.600

Fran Verhalen: From 2014 to 2020, they reduced their fugitive ethylene oxide emissions from the site by approximately 92%.

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00:42:27.240 --> 00:42:44.910

Fran Verhalen: Evonik Corporation also uses a scrubber for point source control of ethylene oxide emissions. This unit has a 95% efficiency rating, meaning that it removes 95% of the air toxics emissions.

224

00:42:46.140 --> 00:42:57.600

Fran Verhalen: Because the facility uses a batch processing operation for its annual production, Evonik produces different amounts of products and associated emissions each year.

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00:42:58.830 --> 00:43:07.440

Fran Verhalen: Between 2014 and 2020, Evonik had over 21% reduction in additional annual

226

00:43:08.580 --> 00:43:13.950

Fran Verhalen: actual ethylene oxide emissions from the site's stack scrubber.

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00:43:21.030 --> 00:43:27.960

Fran Verhalen: Evonik's total ethylene oxide emissions is composed of its fugitive sources and its point sources emissions.

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00:43:29.070 --> 00:43:50.400

Fran Verhalen: As seen on this chart, Evonik has been able to reduce its total ethylene oxide emissions since 2014 by about 50%. Reductions are associated with improvements from Evonik's improved leak detection and repair program and- and improvements to the efficiency of operation of its scrubber.

229

00:43:51.720 --> 00:43:57.300

Fran Verhalen: EPA will continue to monitor the ethylene oxide emissions from Evonik Corporation.

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00:43:58.470 --> 00:44:10.530

Fran Verhalen: On an annual basis, you yourselves can check on emissions inventories and toxic risk inventories from Evonik Corporation and other facilities of interest.

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00:44:14.430 --> 00:44:21.180

Fran Verhalen: Evonik has plans for three areas of continued work to reduce emissions of ethylene oxide in the coming years.

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00:44:22.680 --> 00:44:29.310

Fran Verhalen: Future ethylene oxide fugitive emission reduction plans include: One,

233

00:44:30.030 --> 00:44:51.240

Fran Verhalen: in discussion with LDEQ, Evonik is assessing a more stringent leak detection and repair program that would require all components, including connectors, to be evaluated on a quarterly monitoring schedule to reduce fugitive ethylene oxide emissions from the site.

234

00:44:53.400 --> 00:45:13.410

Fran Verhalen: Two, Evonik is evaluating additional ways to reduce its stack emissions by improving its scrubber operations to determine if there is a technical enhancement that would increase removal efficiency of waste gases, thereby reducing ethylene oxide emissions.

235

00:45:15.180 --> 00:45:27.660

Fran Verhalen: And three, Evonik has hired a consultant to model each emission location and evaluate the control effectiveness, and propose new emission reduction projects.

236

00:45:32.970 --> 00:45:40.620

Fran Verhalen: EPA has been reviewing our regulations that regulate processes that use ethylene oxide and produce emissions.

237

00:45:41.670 --> 00:45:53.670

Fran Verhalen: In May of 2020, EPA finalized a revision to the Miscellaneous Organic Chemical Manufacturing (or the 'MON') rule.

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00:45:55.230 --> 00:46:09.030

Fran Verhalen: In June 2021, EPA announced that we intend to reconsider certain aspects of the 2020 MON rule in response to five administrative petitions.

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00:46:10.260 --> 00:46:21.480

Fran Verhalen: The agency granted reconsideration on the following aspects of the final rule to- to provide an additional opportunity for public comment.

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00:46:23.430 --> 00:46:34.650

Fran Verhalen: The use - First, the use of EPA's Integrated Risk Information System value for ethylene oxide in assessing cancer risk for the MON source category.

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00:46:35.100 --> 00:46:48.030

Fran Verhalen: And two, the use of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Risk Value for Ethylene Oxide as an alternative risk value to EPA's Integrated Risk Information System value.

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00:46:49.350 --> 00:46:59.040

Fran Verhalen: The Agency will issue a Federal Register notice at a future date initiating public review and comment on the issues listed above.

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00:47:00.630 --> 00:47:13.920

Fran Verhalen: EPA is continuing to review all issues raised in the petitions for reconsideration and may choose to initiate reconsideration of additional issues in the future.

244

00:47:17.460 --> 00:47:26.970

Fran Verhalen: EPA is currently preparing revisions to the ethylene oxide emitting commercial sterilization facilities and hospital sterilizers.

245

00:47:27.960 --> 00:47:49.080

Fran Verhalen: We expect to propose these rules for public comment in the coming months. The final rules for these two rules are expected to be published by the end of 2020 for the commercial sterilizers and the end of 2023 for the hospital sterilizers.

246

00:47:51.420 --> 00:47:57.090

Fran Verhalen: Reviews for three more rules that apply to ethylene oxide production have been initiated.

247

00:47:58.200 --> 00:48:07.170

Fran Verhalen: EPA is scheduled to finalize revisions as appropriate to polyethers polyols production rule,

248

00:48:08.220 --> 00:48:12.330

Fran Verhalen: the synthetic organic chemical manufacturing industry rule,

249

00:48:13.950 --> 00:48:20.010

Fran Verhalen: and the organic liquids distribution non-gasoline rule in 2024.

250

00:48:21.720 --> 00:48:33.900

Fran Verhalen: Any potential revisions would be proposed for public comment at a future date, and there are ethylene oxide-emitting facilities in Louisiana that are currently regulated by these rules.

251

00:48:40.560 --> 00:48:44.790

Fran Verhalen: Evonik has proposed plans are implemented in --

252

00:48:46.170 --> 00:48:54.540

Fran Verhalen: Evonik has proposed plans or implemented modifications to improve ethylene oxide emissions from their facility.

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00:48:55.530 --> 00:49:07.050

Fran Verhalen: Efforts by Evonik Corporation to control emissions between 2014 and 2018 have resulted in a 30% reduction in risk from this facility.

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00:49:07.860 --> 00:49:32.490

Fran Verhalen: The reduced estimated cancer risk based on 2018 emissions is above the "100 in 1 million" cancer risk guideline. EPA finds that this risk is not sufficiently protective of human health and we will work with Evonik Corporation and LDEQ to evaluate ways to reduce emissions of ethylene oxide.

255

00:49:34.380 --> 00:49:50.190

Fran Verhalen: Please remember EPA modeling of estimated risks is very conservative. It assumes a continuous 24-hours-per-day inhalation exposure to ethylene oxide for a lifetime of 70 years.

256

00:49:52.740 --> 00:49:59.820

Fran Verhalen: EPA is continuing to review and revise our regulations that affect ethylene oxide emissions.

257

00:50:01.680 --> 00:50:10.980

Fran Verhalen: And EPA, LDEQ, and the facilities will be discussing additional ways to address emissions of ethylene oxide.

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00:50:16.470 --> 00:50:22.950

Fran Verhalen: We've provided a web link for your convenience to look up additional information about ethylene oxide.

259

00:50:24.270 --> 00:50:35.610

Fran Verhalen: It is found at W-W-W dot E-P-A dot gov forward slash ethylene dash oxide.

260

00:50:37.440 --> 00:50:43.200

Fran Verhalen: Also, EPA hosted an introductory webinar on ethylene oxide in May of this year.

261

00:50:44.250 --> 00:51:00.840

Fran Verhalen: This information can be found at W-W-W dot E-P-A dot G-O-V forward slash L-A forward slash air dash issues dash Louisiana.

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00:51:02.400 --> 00:51:03.660

Fran Verhalen: And we have provided

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00:51:04.740 --> 00:51:07.860

Fran Verhalen: the link, also for the Texas --

264

00:51:09.450 --> 00:51:11.790

Fran Verhalen: where you can find it on our Texas web page.

265

00:51:17.280 --> 00:51:27.060

Fran Verhalen: EPA has provided some resources for additional information about air toxics and regulations for air toxics. Some of these topics include:

266

00:51:28.110 --> 00:51:30.660

Fran Verhalen: the list of the air toxics pollutants,

267

00:51:32.010 --> 00:51:39.870

Fran Verhalen: an overview of our risk and technology program, and the Plain English Guide to the Clean Air Act.

268

00:51:41.010 --> 00:51:43.290

Fran Verhalen: I thank you for your attention this evening.

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00:51:44.880 --> 00:51:46.170

Fran Verhalen: Debora, back to you.

270

00:51:51.690 --> 00:51:54.720

Debora Browning: Thank you, Fran, for your ethylene oxide presentation.

271

00:51:56.070 --> 00:52:14.040

Debora Browning: EPA would like to introduce two community advocates, Mrs. Mary Hampton and Mr. Bobby Taylor from the Concerned Citizens of St. John. We look forward to hearing more from these community advocates on their community concerns about ethylene oxide emission.

272

00:52:15.330 --> 00:52:17.970

Debora Browning: First we'd like to start with Mrs. Hampton.

273

00:52:21.750 --> 00:52:23.580

Debora Browning: If she can unmute her phone.

274

00:52:31.470 --> 00:52:38.040

Debora Browning: Mrs. Hampton, if you're calling in on a telephone, you can press *6 to unmute yourself.

275

00:53:02.670 --> 00:53:05.970

Janetta Coats: Debora, this is Janetta. What is, what is the first name again?

276

00:53:07.200 --> 00:53:08.760

Debora Browning: Mary Hamza.

277

00:53:09.180 --> 00:53:16.020

Janetta Coats: Okay, I see her. She's blinking here. I'm not quite sure if she's having difficulty or not.

278

00:53:18.540 --> 00:53:38.070

Debora Browning: It appears that she doesn't have her audio on the computer on the microphone. I believe she was going to attempt to call in. What I'll do is I'll shift over to Mr. Taylor and maybe Gloria Vaughn might be able to reach out to her for some assistance.

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00:53:39.390 --> 00:53:40.080

Great. Thank you.

280

00:53:41.340 --> 00:53:46.500

Debora Browning: Mr. Taylor, at this time if you'd like to unmute your phone we'd like to hear from you.

281

00:53:49.620 --> 00:54:01.200

Robert Taylor II: All right, good to know. My name is Robert Taylor and I'm the Director of the Concerned Citizens of St. John, and we thank you all for the opportunity

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00:54:01.770 --> 00:54:25.080

Robert Taylor II: to appear here. I think Miss Hampton had some medical surgery for something today, so that might explain why she's not responding. But I am -- I'm very grateful for the information that's been presented here, because we've been in this struggle here. We formed this group in 2016

283

00:54:26.100 --> 00:54:40.320

Robert Taylor II: in response to our being informed by EPA of the chlorine danger that we were facing here, and so, for the last five years or so

284

00:54:41.610 --> 00:54:43.200

Robert Taylor II: our fight has been

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00:54:44.280 --> 00:54:55.140

Robert Taylor II: with the 29 chemicals that are being emitted on our community just from the Denka DuPont facility.

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00:54:56.550 --> 00:54:59.370

Robert Taylor II: And we have -- have lately discovered

287

00:55:00.600 --> 00:55:04.680

Robert Taylor II: Evoniks -- Evoniks. [chuckles]. There it is.

288

00:55:06.150 --> 00:55:07.500

Robert Taylor II: And in a frightening thought of

289

00:55:09.000 --> 00:55:09.960

Robert Taylor II: ethylene oxide,

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00:55:12.210 --> 00:55:35.670

Robert Taylor II: even more worrisome to me if I understood the presenter correctly, that they are detecting some ambient ethylene oxide or some ethylene oxide where they are not sure of its origin. Gut I guess that will be something that we really have to look into some more.

291

00:55:37.380 --> 00:55:40.320

Robert Taylor II: But when I look at the overall

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00:55:41.970 --> 00:55:43.050

Robert Taylor II: situation

293

00:55:44.370 --> 00:55:44.970

Robert Taylor II: for

294

00:55:46.050 --> 00:56:10.500

Robert Taylor II: the -- the impacted communities here, and especially Reserve, but with Union Carbide actually being on the opposite side of

the Mississippi River from us in a different parish there on the West Bank of St Charles Parish, and they are posing such a threat to us here in Reserve.

295

00:56:12.180 --> 00:56:32.070

Robert Taylor II: On top of the deal that we have with DuPont Denka, then to find that Evonik right here on [INDISCERNIBLE], to the west of us in this same community, it is -- this is just very, very depressing. It is frightening.

296

00:56:36.270 --> 00:56:37.560

Robert Taylor II: We also,

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00:56:38.580 --> 00:56:51.930

Robert Taylor II: as a community and as this one organization, although we have the support of so many wonderful people AND organizations, but when we find ourselves faced with

298

00:56:54.390 --> 00:56:55.950

Robert Taylor II: the ethylene oxide

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00:56:57.060 --> 00:57:10.710

Robert Taylor II: coming from these two plants with the -- with the chloroprene and the other issues that's right in our front yard. We have Marathon with a myriad of

300

00:57:13.080 --> 00:57:30.810

Robert Taylor II: poisons that they're putting on us in such enormous quantities. We have more no choice but to wonder what is going on. How could one community

301

00:57:31.800 --> 00:57:48.060

Robert Taylor II: or one group of people suffer such horrors? The- the- the level of poisons that are being dumped into the Black communities is unconscionable.

302

00:57:48.750 --> 00:58:11.220

Robert Taylor II: And it is hard not to, not even for the most optimistic people in our community, to realize that there's some racism going on here. That environmentally, how could we be 92% of the population that is being bombarded with these poisons? Reserve is such a small community.

303

00:58:14.610 --> 00:58:17.520

Robert Taylor II: I mean it's- it's- it's-

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00:58:18.660 --> 00:58:23.610

Robert Taylor II: it's very perplexing and I'm hoping that EPA

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00:58:25.080 --> 00:58:39.600

Robert Taylor II: can bring to us some sense of- of value to our people by helping us to find a way to protect ourselves from the onslaught

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00:58:41.100 --> 00:58:44.340

Robert Taylor II: of these giant petrochemical companies

307

00:58:45.600 --> 00:58:53.250

Robert Taylor II: who seem to come in and take over. Our community's government from every level

308

00:58:54.660 --> 00:58:59.640

Robert Taylor II: seem to have failed us. I can't imagine

309

00:59:00.930 --> 00:59:06.750

Robert Taylor II: how this situation could have gotten to the level that it is today.

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00:59:08.430 --> 00:59:25.530

Robert Taylor II: How could EPA, DEQ, and the other people charged with the protection of the environment, the protection of the people, from environmental crises such as these?

311

00:59:27.480 --> 00:59:32.100

Robert Taylor II: And I may not be in a position to be

312

00:59:33.870 --> 00:59:44.430

Robert Taylor II: fair-minded in this. I've had -- since I am a victim of this horror. This is, this is a horror that is maddening.

313

00:59:45.540 --> 00:59:48.570

Robert Taylor II: The people in this community are so put up on.

314

00:59:50.190 --> 01:00:00.060

Robert Taylor II: I've been here all my life. I was born and raised. I was born about four blocks from where the Denka plant is right now

315

01:00:00.810 --> 01:00:13.020

Robert Taylor II: in western Reserve. My father later moved us down to eastern Reserve. In east Reserve, well, DuPont plant decided to come in and build right on top of our communities.

316

01:00:13.470 --> 01:00:23.040

Robert Taylor II: We did not seek these people; we did not go and try to build our communities around them. This was put up on us, and they had to have the permission

317

01:00:23.610 --> 01:00:47.280

Robert Taylor II: of the government. Federal, local, and state. And we are just now reaching out to people in desperation, because this is overwhelming for us. We are further motivated by this. We are not going to give up the struggle. But this is -- this -- this the quandary that we are in, is --

318

01:00:49.050 --> 01:01:08.970

Robert Taylor II: I don't know the definition, for I don't know how we explain that for over 50 years we could find ourselves -- I'm talking about them, the people here in this community, this -- this poor working-class community.

319

01:01:11.070 --> 01:01:25.890

Robert Taylor II: And maybe that is the problem. Blacks in -- in working class communities or otherwise, seem to be the target of these obviously predatory

320

01:01:26.370 --> 01:01:40.590

Robert Taylor II: organizations, industries, businesses, and as well as government agencies, I am so heartbroken that I'm beginning to see that the government has failed us.

321

01:01:41.370 --> 01:01:51.270

Robert Taylor II: That my granddaughter who is afflicted with this respiratory illness, my daughter, who has a --

322

01:01:51.750 --> 01:02:06.420

Robert Taylor II: immune system disease that is said to be one-in-a-million, and we find three, four young Black women living in east Reserve within the fenceline with this very rare disease that their doctor tells them is caused by

323

01:02:06.960 --> 01:02:16.560

Robert Taylor II: their exposure of a lifetime to chloroprene. And our children, the future of our race, of our communities here,

324

01:02:17.910 --> 01:02:41.580

Robert Taylor II: trapped over there 1500 feet from the fenceline with the government informing us. EPA informed us that we have a risk factor that is 1500 times the national average as a direct result of our exposure to chloroprene. They informed us of that in 2016.

325

01:02:42.660 --> 01:03:07.260

Robert Taylor II: And nothing has been done to stop that. These children are still being bused into that school from all over the parish to spend seven or eight hours in that environment, not to speak of those that live there and the other people, all of us, human beings. So,

326

01:03:08.700 --> 01:03:10.950

Robert Taylor II: I really don't want to just get-

327

01:03:12.780 --> 01:03:29.850

Robert Taylor II: to run off with this, because I, this is so traumatic to me, I really at this point, I understand I think a bit better what psychological trauma is. But my trauma goes all the way to the physical as well.

328

01:03:30.660 --> 01:03:48.960

Robert Taylor II: It shows us how we have been so negatively impacted by our exposure to these chemicals that we had a highest death rate in any county parish in the United States from the COVID

329

01:03:49.620 --> 01:04:15.840

Robert Taylor II: That spoke directly to the fears of the other things that we had discovered. Now we have living or dying proof of it. Of all of the counties in the United States of America, St. John the Baptist Parish rated the highest in death from Corona. We must do something, please

330

01:04:17.070 --> 01:04:17.940

Robert Taylor II: help us.

331

01:04:19.200 --> 01:04:19.740

Thank you.

332

01:04:23.880 --> 01:04:34.260

Debora Browning: Thank you, Mr. Tyler. We appreciate you sharing your concerns with us tonight. Mrs. Hampton are you available to unmute your phone?

333

01:04:38.610 --> 01:04:52.440

Debora Browning: It appears you're still having some difficulty, and we regret that there is some technical issues going on. Gloria Vaughn has mentioned that she will reach out to you personally tomorrow, Mrs. Hampton. So be watching for her call.

334

01:05:01.320 --> 01:05:02.580

Debora Browning: Next slide, please.

335

01:05:06.930 --> 01:05:13.560

Debora Browning: We're at the question-and-answer portion of our meeting and your comments and questions are very important to us. And

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01:05:14.280 --> 01:05:23.040

Debora Browning: because we want to hear from the community, as mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, you can post your questions in the chat box using the button at the bottom of your screen.

337

01:05:24.180 --> 01:05:39.810

Debora Browning: And several have already posted their questions, so thank you. Please note, we have a limited number of -- limited amount of time this evening. But we do want to make sure that we answer as many questions as possible, so when you ask your question

338

01:05:41.040 --> 01:05:44.850

Debora Browning: we'll try to limit those to two minutes in order to answer them.

339

01:05:47.520 --> 01:05:54.000

Debora Browning: As a reminder, this meeting is focused on hearing from the citizens in the Reserve area near the Evonik facility.

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01:05:54.570 --> 01:06:07.680

Debora Browning: Any- any questions related to industry permits, any enforcement including inspections and surveillance or legal actions, or about other areas or facilities will not be addressed during this community meeting.

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01:06:08.220 --> 01:06:23.940

Debora Browning: You may send these questions or other ethylene oxide-related questions and comments to the EPA Region 6 email box at R6EthyleneOxide@epa.gov. This again will be posted in the chat box.

342

01:06:25.320 --> 01:06:30.900

Debora Browning: up, I will list- will post a list of questions and answers on the EPA Region 6 website page

343

01:06:31.770 --> 01:06:42.360

Debora Browning: listed on the slide, and again will be listed in the chat box. These links were also included in the announcement will be forwarded to the States afterwards for distribution.

344

01:06:42.930 --> 01:06:55.740

Debora Browning: My colleague Janetta Coats will assist me with the Q&A session. I will check periodically with Janetta for hand raises, private chat questions, and to see if any dial-in participants have any questions.

345

01:06:56.310 --> 01:07:02.670

Debora Browning: For those dialing in on the phone, when you are addressed please mute your phone by pressing *6.

346

01:07:04.170 --> 01:07:14.370

Debora Browning: There will be an opportunity for attendees to ask a question during the session. When you're recognized, you can unmute your phone by pressing *6 again.

347

01:07:15.510 --> 01:07:19.950

Debora Browning: If you feel comfortable, please identify yourself prior to asking your question.

348

01:07:22.620 --> 01:07:25.050

Debora Browning: Fran will begin with our first question.

349

01:07:26.730 --> 01:07:27.120

Fran Verhalen: Okay.

350

01:07:28.440 --> 01:07:29.070

Fran Verhalen: Sounds good.

351

01:07:32.310 --> 01:07:34.650

Debora Browning: Get to it, hang on just a second.

352

01:07:40.170 --> 01:07:46.500

Debora Browning: Has any EtO sampling been conducted in Louisiana? If so, where?

353

01:07:47.760 --> 01:07:49.110
Fran Verhalen: At this time,

354

01:07:50.190 --> 01:07:58.080
Fran Verhalen: I don't know of any specific modeling for ethylene oxide in Louisiana.

355

01:08:02.490 --> 01:08:09.810
Fran Verhalen: I'll confirm with LDEQ and we'll post that online, but the EPA has not conducted any to-date.

356

01:08:13.830 --> 01:08:21.960
Debora Browning: Thanks, Fran. I'm doing -- I do know that Janetta has received a couple of private chats. I'd like to start with her

357

01:08:23.310 --> 01:08:24.000
Debora Browning: to see if --
358

01:08:25.410 --> 01:08:33.720

Debora Browning: First, to see if the about the hand raisers. I noticed a couple of hand raises in the private chat, so Janetta, I'm going to switch it over to you for a few moments.

359

01:08:34.470 --> 01:08:36.090
Janetta Coats: Okay, Debora. Thank you.

360

01:08:37.770 --> 01:08:50.040
Janetta Coats: We've got one hand raised from Lydia. If you would like to *6 your phone. Your - Unmute yourself and ask your question, we would appreciate it.

361

01:08:50.460 --> 01:08:51.660
Lydia: Is lydia hi.

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01:08:53.400 --> 01:08:53.700
Lydia: I'm

363

01:08:56.370 --> 01:09:08.370
Lydia: [INDISCERNIBLE] and thank you all for being here and answering any questions that we may have explained, some of the things that's going on I'll just --

365

01:09:16.710 --> 01:09:18.120
Janetta Coats: Miss Lydia --

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01:09:18.150 --> 01:09:19.830

Lydia: Is that information available? --

367

01:09:20.850 --> 01:09:30.120

Janetta Coats: Yes, we're having static. I'm not quite sure if something else is on or near your phone or computer that is causing the static.

368

01:09:31.170 --> 01:09:31.650

Lydia: [INDISCERNIBLE]

369

01:09:31.740 --> 01:09:34.680

Janetta Coats: [INDISCERNIBLE] can move forward.

370

01:09:37.590 --> 01:09:38.190

Fran Verhalen: I would need --

371

01:09:39.000 --> 01:09:40.920

Fran Verhalen: To repeat everything that --

372

01:09:42.570 --> 01:09:50.040

Lydia: I was asking if there was continuous -- continuous fenceline monitoring around the Evonik plant.

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01:09:51.510 --> 01:09:54.060

Fran Verhalen: Thank you for the question and your --

374

01:09:55.410 --> 01:10:15.420

Fran Verhalen: I'm glad that we're here to present for you tonight. Um -- The continuous monitoring, I do not know of any continuous monitoring around the Evonik plant. They may be doing some. They are not monitoring for ethylene oxide, to my knowledge.

375

01:10:17.670 --> 01:10:36.510

Lydia: That's a concern of -- one of the concerns that I have that this information is needed. I know you stated that some of the emissions with ethylene oxide can't be determine where it's coming from, but this is something that you need to know --

Fran Verhalen: Correct.

376

01:10:38.130 --> 01:10:45.240

Lydia: -- to find out what you're going to do with the information, not just gather information for the sake of gathering it.

377

01:10:47.550 --> 01:10:56.580

Fran Verhalen: You're correct. Um. What I was referring to by not knowing where it's coming from, EPA has a series of

378

01:10:57.600 --> 01:11:10.350

Fran Verhalen: urban and rural monitors that aren't associated with any particular facility across the nation, and we're just trying to see

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01:11:13.860 --> 01:11:26.310

Fran Verhalen: what air toxics are present and, in doing that, we did determine when we analyzed the samples that there were concentrations of ethylene oxide

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01:11:26.850 --> 01:11:40.110

Fran Verhalen: in those samples. A lot of that, a lot of those concentrations are very near our detection level, so we're not sure if we're reading ethylene oxide or another chemical that

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01:11:41.520 --> 01:11:45.450

Fran Verhalen: is analyzed and comes out at the same time. It- it's-

382

01:11:46.800 --> 01:11:49.920

Fran Verhalen: it masks each other, but

383

01:11:51.060 --> 01:11:57.570

Fran Verhalen: we're doing more research to determine that and we are looking very specifically for those sources.

384

01:11:58.650 --> 01:12:04.410

Fran Verhalen: In addressing your question about fenceline monitoring; at this time

385

01:12:05.790 --> 01:12:11.010

Fran Verhalen: our regulations do not require fenceline monitoring for ethylene oxide.

386

01:12:13.320 --> 01:12:15.330

Fran Verhalen: So thank you for your question.

387

01:12:16.950 --> 01:12:17.280

Lydia: Okay.

388

01:12:18.030 --> 01:12:19.920

Lydia: I had more but I'll go ahead and let somebody --

389

01:12:20.970 --> 01:12:23.730

Lydia: Well, the other thing is, you know,

390

01:12:25.170 --> 01:12:34.050

Lydia: it's being stated that there's, there's higher than normal or higher levels of exposure in -- at -- from that plant.

391

01:12:35.430 --> 01:12:44.910

Lydia: And, but you can't -- You're not monitoring specifically for ethylene oxide. That's something that we need. That's one of the things that we're going to be pushing for.

392

01:12:46.260 --> 01:12:55.410

Lydia: I know there are different chemicals, and I know you- you're testing and that one showed a higher spike. But to just come out and tell us it's high --

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01:12:56.430 --> 01:12:59.130

Lydia: And then we had -- it seems to be excuses of --

394

01:13:00.180 --> 01:13:01.830

Lydia: -- like nothing is going to be done because

395

01:13:03.270 --> 01:13:06.930

Lydia: it's not really -- you're not really monitoring that.

396

01:13:07.950 --> 01:13:14.040

Lydia: So, and you leaving it up -- seem to be leaving it up to the plants to -- to --

397

01:13:16.680 --> 01:13:24.060

Lydia: Well, I don't know if its "monitoring" -- the right words -- But for them to reduce

398

01:13:25.140 --> 01:13:33.150

Lydia: the emissions, can it -- We need some assurances that it's -- they're going to be reduced, how they're going to be reduced.

399

01:13:33.660 --> 01:13:42.000

Lydia: And you know, as far as safety and, as Mr. Taylor said, you know, we're in the middle of all -- all of these plants, and I know -- You know, things are being done

400

01:13:42.570 --> 01:13:52.860

Lydia: to -- well, not a -- Hopefully things are being done to protect us. But it seems one after another, and this is just coming out in the last four or five years,

401

01:13:53.640 --> 01:14:05.910

Lydia: three years, we were dealing with one thing. Now it's something else. And I'm sure it's more than that. So just coming in and telling us, letting us be aware of it, that's fine. But we need something done. Thank you.

402

01:14:07.230 --> 01:14:09.330

Fran Verhalen: Thank you, and yes.

403

01:14:10.470 --> 01:14:14.550

Fran Verhalen: I hear your frustration at our process and procedure.

404

01:14:16.950 --> 01:14:19.920

Fran Verhalen: EPA is working on reviewing

405

01:14:21.060 --> 01:14:26.520

Fran Verhalen: and as appropriately, revising the -- the regulations so that we do --

406

01:14:28.920 --> 01:14:32.490

Fran Verhalen: that we are more protective of the citizens.

407

01:14:34.080 --> 01:14:35.280

Fran Verhalen: The monitoring

408

01:14:36.690 --> 01:14:42.300

Fran Verhalen: will provide some information. Because this is a risk number

409

01:14:43.470 --> 01:14:47.010

Fran Verhalen: that is more protective

410

01:14:49.530 --> 01:14:51.960
Fran Verhalen: of human health and

411

01:14:53.550 --> 01:15:08.790
Fran Verhalen: so when we go to write the regulations, that risk is part of how we come up with the regulations but it's not the only thing. So there's a lot that goes into our rules as we go through to write them.

412

01:15:10.320 --> 01:15:17.040
Fran Verhalen: And that's part of our regulatory process, so I do hear your frustration that

413

01:15:18.660 --> 01:15:23.670
Fran Verhalen: all you're hearing right now is that there's a risk, but we're not providing

414

01:15:24.840 --> 01:15:27.390
Fran Verhalen: a specific action that will occur tomorrow.

415

01:15:29.100 --> 01:15:51.090
Fran Verhalen: These things will take some time and -- and our first step, though, has been to make sure that we get some information out to you as we continue to work on other fronts, to work toward providing, hopefully, for you, a more satisfying answer with actions.

416

01:16:02.340 --> 01:16:05.340
Debora Browning: Janetta do you have any other hand-raises?

417

01:16:05.880 --> 01:16:10.080
Janetta Coats: I do not see any additional hands raised.

418

01:16:11.280 --> 01:16:17.490
Janetta Coats: But I do have a question or concern that has been posed to the-

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01:16:18.870 --> 01:16:19.560
Janetta Coats: to Fran.

420

01:16:22.020 --> 01:16:22.380
Fran Verhalen: Okay.

421

01:16:23.400 --> 01:16:31.980

Janetta Coats: The question - Well, actually this is a concern, Fran. And at the end is a question. It is a little lengthy, so I'll speak very slowly so that you can absorb it all

422

01:16:32.340 --> 01:16:34.530

Janetta Coats: to provide an answer.

423

01:16:35.730 --> 01:16:38.460

Janetta Coats: This is a concern from citizen.

424

01:16:39.960 --> 01:16:47.970

Janetta Coats: "I am concerned this message may not be reaching the people it needs to be reaching.

425

01:16:49.260 --> 01:17:05.580

Janetta Coats: In 2015, there were two separate incidents of student illnesses at Geismar Public school site which is between 300 to 500 feet from Evonik.

426

01:17:06.720 --> 01:17:21.240

Janetta Coats: Students' symptoms match those of ethylene oxide, which included vomiting, headaches, burning eyes, respiratory ailments, and weakness.

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01:17:22.800 --> 01:17:37.920

Janetta Coats: The Louisiana Office of Public Health and ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry) refuse to release this investigation to the public,

428

01:17:39.240 --> 01:17:54.540

Janetta Coats: while LDEQ Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality never communicated the issue of ethylene oxide to the community when they were supposed to back in 2018.

429

01:17:55.890 --> 01:18:02.700

Janetta Coats: Due to the scientific uncertainty associated with early life exposures to ethylene

430

01:18:03.990 --> 01:18:17.070

Janetta Coats: oxide and other chemicals, the history of industrial accidents in this parish, and Evonik's Clean Air Act regulatory violations,

431

01:18:17.700 --> 01:18:47.340

Janetta Coats: the lack of the State regulatory oversight, and enforcement in this state, and the lack of transparency in state and school officials, as well as long-delayed and insufficient public communication of this issue to the public here, what will you do to ensure that the public is safe?"

432

01:18:50.970 --> 01:18:52.740

Janetta Coats: That's the end of the concern, Fran.

433

01:18:53.100 --> 01:19:00.720

Fran Verhalen: Okay, thank you um thanks. Thank you for the question. It's a very long question.

434

01:19:07.890 --> 01:19:13.830

Fran Verhalen: Would you repeat the very last part of it, the actual question was "What will you to ensure...?"

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01:19:13.860 --> 01:19:17.880

Janetta Coats: What will you do to ensure that the public is safe?

436

01:19:18.120 --> 01:19:19.080

Fran Verhalen: Is safe. Okay.

437

01:19:20.790 --> 01:19:22.710

Fran Verhalen: Well there's a lot packed into that,

438

01:19:24.660 --> 01:19:29.460

Fran Verhalen: and EPA works very hard

439

01:19:32.730 --> 01:19:37.860

Fran Verhalen: to make sure that our regulations, our actions

440

01:19:39.300 --> 01:19:40.380

Fran Verhalen: are protective

441

01:19:43.050 --> 01:19:44.070

Fran Verhalen: for everybody.

442

01:19:46.890 --> 01:19:55.680

Fran Verhalen: We work with our state partners. We do have some local air agency partners also in our tribes

443

01:19:58.140 --> 01:20:04.560

Fran Verhalen: to ensure that the rules and regulations that they have are also protective

444

01:20:05.760 --> 01:20:06.870

Fran Verhalen: for everyone.

445

01:20:12.840 --> 01:20:15.960

Fran Verhalen: The -- "assurance" is a hard word.

446

01:20:18.750 --> 01:20:20.400

Fran Verhalen: We do the best we can.

447

01:20:22.230 --> 01:20:23.160

Fran Verhalen: And we do --

448

01:20:24.420 --> 01:20:31.980

Fran Verhalen: We are here to -- tonight to hear the concern, so that we can focus our attention, better

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01:20:33.330 --> 01:20:34.770

Fran Verhalen: and see if we can

450

01:20:36.810 --> 01:20:41.430

Fran Verhalen: get closer to that assurance for you so that you feel that

451

01:20:43.110 --> 01:20:47.310

Fran Verhalen: we are doing our job. We do work very hard

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01:20:48.330 --> 01:20:48.960

Fran Verhalen: on

453

01:20:50.070 --> 01:20:51.150

Fran Verhalen: working

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01:20:54.330 --> 01:21:01.590

Fran Verhalen: to make our regulations strong and then to enforce those regulations.

455

01:21:03.960 --> 01:21:04.830

Fran Verhalen: But it's a very --

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01:21:07.290 --> 01:21:09.210

Fran Verhalen: It's a complex

457

01:21:11.910 --> 01:21:19.830

Fran Verhalen: manner in which we work. So -- And then one of the things that we do and that -- that's

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01:21:21.120 --> 01:21:30.150

Fran Verhalen: somewhat difficult to understand when we allow some risk to be present.

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01:21:35.100 --> 01:21:43.530

Fran Verhalen: And that concept is just that we do allow the risk to be present and that's hard to understand sometimes.

460

01:21:45.240 --> 01:21:47.100

Fran Verhalen: But there's uncertainty.

461

01:21:48.780 --> 01:22:07.890

Fran Verhalen: No, it's not uncertain. When we develop our risk numbers, we are very conservative and we add in safety factors so that we are more protective, because we understand that there are going to be times when

462

01:22:11.160 --> 01:22:21.930

Fran Verhalen: the -- it appears that they're not -- that the concentrations are not protective. So the risk number ends up being protective.

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01:22:23.250 --> 01:22:26.250

Fran Verhalen: And I'm not sure I addressed your question completely.

464

01:22:29.520 --> 01:22:30.480

Fran Verhalen: Mike Koerber,

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01:22:32.190 --> 01:22:35.970

Fran Verhalen: can you add anything, perhaps for --

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01:22:37.620 --> 01:22:42.600

Fran Verhalen: a little bit about our -- our regulations for this and how we go about that?

467

01:22:44.700 --> 01:22:57.660

Mike Koerber: I'll try. Hi, I'm Mike Koerber. I'm a Deputy Director at EPA's Air headquarters office. And what Fran said I think really gets to our mission at EPA in terms of protecting public health.

468

01:22:58.230 --> 01:23:08.010

Mike Koerber: We have authorities under the Clean Air Act. We set regulations. We currently do regulate facilities in the Reserve/LaPlace/Taft area.

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01:23:08.970 --> 01:23:15.360

Mike Koerber: But as Fran said, we are concerned that those regulations, and I think what we're hearing from you all tonight, is those regulations

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01:23:15.720 --> 01:23:22.650

Mike Koerber: are not sufficient. They're not tight enough. And we have committed to reviewing those regulations and making necessary changes.

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01:23:23.100 --> 01:23:29.340

Mike Koerber: It's not a fast process, but it is a very transparent process and it's one that we need to be careful

472

01:23:29.820 --> 01:23:42.480

Mike Koerber: and methodical about because we want to make sure that those regulations are sustainable, defensible, and at the end of the day, as she said, achieves the necessary emission reductions to protect your health.

473

01:23:43.170 --> 01:23:52.260

Mike Koerber: So that is the process that we are committed towards currently. As Fran said, we are also working very closely with our state partners, they have other authorities

474

01:23:52.710 --> 01:24:05.970

Mike Koerber: that they can invoke and those may be able to achieve emission reductions faster. And we clearly want to participate with the state and the company to see what can be done on a faster timeframe.

475

01:24:06.600 --> 01:24:14.100

Mike Koerber: But nevertheless, EPA is fully committed to reviewing its rules and tightening them as necessary to protect public health in this area.

476

01:24:15.720 --> 01:24:16.380

Fran Verhalen: Thanks Mike.

477

01:24:18.390 --> 01:24:44.010

Janetta Coats: Okay Fran, we have another direct message here from a resident and that question is, "EPA concluded in 2016 that ethylene oxide is carcinogenic to humans. Why haven't anything been done to protect residents who live on the fenceline and have died from cancer?"

478

01:24:49.290 --> 01:24:49.650

Janetta Coats: That's the question.

479

01:24:49.740 --> 01:24:51.750

Fran Verhalen: Thank you, thank you for the question.

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01:24:55.740 --> 01:25:00.120

Fran Verhalen: EPA has not been standing still since 2016.

481

01:25:01.860 --> 01:25:12.180

Fran Verhalen: As Mike mentioned just now, our regulatory review process takes a while and we've been working on several

482

01:25:13.440 --> 01:25:15.900

Fran Verhalen: different regulation reviews

483

01:25:16.950 --> 01:25:21.690

Fran Verhalen: that are associated with ethylene oxide. In addition,

484

01:25:23.040 --> 01:25:27.420

Fran Verhalen: we've been working to understand

485

01:25:28.800 --> 01:25:31.620

Fran Verhalen: what the emissions are, where they're coming from.

486

01:25:33.690 --> 01:25:38.340

Fran Verhalen: We're working with the states and the companies to

487

01:25:40.860 --> 01:25:44.160

Fran Verhalen: understand the specifics for each facility that we're --

488

01:25:45.390 --> 01:25:47.160

Fran Verhalen: we're in discussion with

489

01:25:48.660 --> 01:25:49.530

Fran Verhalen: so that we can

490

01:25:51.330 --> 01:25:53.520

Fran Verhalen: be able to offer

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01:25:55.770 --> 01:25:59.490

Fran Verhalen: reasonable information back to the companies as to

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01:26:00.600 --> 01:26:05.190

Fran Verhalen: available technologies that could control and should control

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01:26:06.480 --> 01:26:08.100

Fran Verhalen: ethylene oxide emissions.

494

01:26:09.210 --> 01:26:11.040

Fran Verhalen: And then the other thing,

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01:26:12.600 --> 01:26:17.340

Fran Verhalen: and one of the reasons we're here now, we also are taking a look at

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01:26:19.260 --> 01:26:21.870

Fran Verhalen: the revised risks since 2016.

497

01:26:22.920 --> 01:26:44.340

Fran Verhalen: You know, that -- that's a five-year-old risk number, based on the emissions from that year. So we -- we did want to update that also and that -- I'm sorry, 2014 was when -- when we started with that so it's -- We've just been trying to update a lot of information recently

498

01:26:45.990 --> 01:26:50.940

Fran Verhalen: and move forward so that we can provide information to you.

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01:26:55.530 --> 01:26:56.010

Fran Verhalen: Debora?

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01:26:59.850 --> 01:27:05.670

Debora Browning: Thank you, Fran. Thank you Mike, also, for your comments and thank you Janetta for your

501

01:27:06.780 --> 01:27:22.770

Debora Browning: comments from the private chat. We have several that have populated into our main chat area, so I'd like to go to that next. The first question is, "Evonik reported substantially reduced EtO emissions in 2018

502

01:27:24.210 --> 01:27:48.300

Debora Browning: compared to previous years. Since the 2018 value appears to be an outlier, wouldn't risk based on the average 2014 to 2018 emissions, which is 22,978 pounds, be more representative of actual risk levels?"

503

01:27:50.700 --> 01:27:56.880

Fran Verhalen: The model that we use uses annual averages, it does not look at

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01:27:57.480 --> 01:28:01.320

Fran Verhalen: a cumulative load and an average over a longer period of time.

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01:28:01.320 --> 01:28:03.300

Fran Verhalen: So,

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01:28:05.220 --> 01:28:10.500

Fran Verhalen: while that seems to be a reasonable

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01:28:10.560 --> 01:28:12.840

Fran Verhalen: presumption in --

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01:28:13.920 --> 01:28:23.580

Fran Verhalen: in the modeling world, we have to set the limits, and those limits are set on an annual basis and it's a calendar year basis so that we can

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01:28:25.500 --> 01:28:31.320

Fran Verhalen: be able to compare information from one facility to another across the nation.

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01:28:34.050 --> 01:28:35.730

1337***994: Could I ask a question, please?

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01:28:44.760 --> 01:28:47.160

Debora Browning: Yes, if you'd like to ask a question, go ahead.

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01:28:48.870 --> 01:28:56.040

1337***994: Yes. Thank you. My name is Wilma Trooper with Louisiana Environmental Action Network. We're having a horrendous thunderstorm here, so

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01:28:57.210 --> 01:29:09.420

1337***994: it's not working very well. So looking back at the 2014 data, as a result of Union Carbide and Evonik, every census tract in St. John the Baptist exceeded

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01:29:10.020 --> 01:29:24.240

1337***994: the 100-in-1-million. The highest number was 316 in a million. So when we're talking about reducing that exposure, that's critical to the community going forward.

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01:29:24.720 --> 01:29:33.900

1337***994: But is there any way we can go backwards and look at the exposure that has occurred over the history of the people living in that area exposed to

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01:29:34.320 --> 01:29:42.900

1337***994: the ethylene oxide emissions from those two facilities? And then my second question is, Fran listed an address for Evonik.

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01:29:43.530 --> 01:29:56.130

1337***994: There's also an Evonik sign at a facility on River Road Highway 44. So my question is, do both of those facilities release ethylene oxide? Thank you.

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01:29:58.950 --> 01:29:59.610

Fran Verhalen: Thank you Wilma,

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01:29:59.700 --> 01:30:07.110

Fran Verhalen: for your question. Let me start with the second one first. I'll have to find out if there are actually two locations

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01:30:09.210 --> 01:30:16.050

Fran Verhalen: and we'll get you an answer back on that. I believe there's just one location that emits ethylene oxide.

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01:30:17.940 --> 01:30:19.410

Fran Verhalen: The risk over time.

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01:30:20.910 --> 01:30:23.250

Fran Verhalen: So, to go back in time.

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01:30:25.320 --> 01:30:29.040

Fran Verhalen: Currently, our risk models

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01:30:30.060 --> 01:30:30.660

Fran Verhalen: are

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01:30:32.220 --> 01:30:38.370

Fran Verhalen: completed as a point in time for a risk at a

526

01:30:38.730 --> 01:30:39.690

Fran Verhalen: specific

527

01:30:40.050 --> 01:30:45.300

Fran Verhalen: time and location. We do not have plans right now to

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01:30:46.350 --> 01:30:51.750

Fran Verhalen: go back and provide a cumulative-type risk

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01:30:51.810 --> 01:30:52.470

Fran Verhalen: over

530

01:30:52.740 --> 01:30:54.150

Fran Verhalen: a longer period of

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01:30:54.150 --> 01:31:07.710

Fran Verhalen: time. I'm not sure that our models are actually designed to do that either, so I will -- again I'll have to double check on that, but right now we don't have plans to

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01:31:09.930 --> 01:31:13.500

Fran Verhalen: provide that type of a cumulative-load

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01:31:14.910 --> 01:31:15.810

Fran Verhalen: risk model.

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01:31:17.040 --> 01:31:19.590

Fran Verhalen: But thank you for the --

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01:31:19.650 --> 01:31:20.010

1337***994: Thank you.

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01:31:28.290 --> 01:31:34.800

Debora Browning: Fran, we're getting several good questions in, so the next question is about mapping.

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01:31:35.550 --> 01:31:54.930

Debora Browning: This person would like to know if EPA has developed any maps from air dispersion modeling of ethylene oxide around plants that emit in Louisiana and Texas that EPA could share to illustrate the areas impacted by ethylene oxide.

538

01:31:55.980 --> 01:31:58.350

Fran Verhalen: That is a good question and at this time

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01:31:59.730 --> 01:32:02.700

Fran Verhalen: Region 6 has not produced any of the maps,

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01:32:03.720 --> 01:32:05.220

Fran Verhalen: the dispersion maps that the

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01:32:06.870 --> 01:32:14.430

Fran Verhalen: requestor is asking about. We may have produced some in conjunction with a

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01:32:15.840 --> 01:32:23.820

Fran Verhalen: regulatory rule evaluation, so I'll have to check with our modelers at headquarters, that's a different group,

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01:32:25.020 --> 01:32:31.920

Fran Verhalen: to see if they have any. If - And I'll check to see if those are available for public view.

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01:32:38.670 --> 01:32:41.130

Debora Browning: Fran, this is also a mapping question.

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01:32:42.210 --> 01:32:56.160

Debora Browning: The comment is, "Forensic Architecture has produced air simulations to demonstrate all chemicals." They, the questioner, provided the link in a video.

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01:32:57.030 --> 01:33:07.890

Debora Browning: They want to know if EPA can present maps in simulations like this to their river communities experiencing many overlapping pollution risks.

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01:33:10.080 --> 01:33:11.820

Fran Verhalen: At this time,

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01:33:13.620 --> 01:33:19.980

Fran Verhalen: and I'm going to flip this over to Mike Koerber in a minute, but at this time I don't know that we have any

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01:33:21.330 --> 01:33:25.260

Fran Verhalen: opportunities to do cumulative mapping

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01:33:27.030 --> 01:33:33.630

Fran Verhalen: or cumulative risk evaluation and then put it in a model for mapping.

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01:33:35.040 --> 01:33:41.940

Fran Verhalen: Mike, are you aware of any type of research that we've got going that could provide this type of

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01:33:44.010 --> 01:33:44.550

Fran Verhalen: product?

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01:33:45.390 --> 01:33:53.520

Mike Koerber: Yeah. Hi, Fran. Let me offer a couple of things. First of all, whoever submitted this comment and provided this citation for this article,

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01:33:53.910 --> 01:34:02.460

Mike Koerber: thank you so much. I mean, I've been looking at that ever since you entered into the chat and it's fascinating in terms of some of the graphics and some of the analyses they've done. So

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01:34:03.150 --> 01:34:12.060

Mike Koerber: as far as the underlying data they use, I think we'll have to read the article and maybe make an assessment. But in terms of a graphical presentation of information,

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01:34:13.170 --> 01:34:25.050

Mike Koerber: very, very effective. And I'll certainly be looking at this. In terms of what we've done at EPA, Fran has referred to the National Air Toxics Assessment that EPA releases on a periodic basis and

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01:34:25.470 --> 01:34:36.030

Mike Koerber: we did in the most recent National Air Toxics Assessment put out what will be called a BAP App, where people can go in and get information sort of rolled up

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01:34:36.510 --> 01:34:46.140

Mike Koerber: for various census tracts and get a sense of what the total risk is from the soup of chemicals that -- that may exist within a given area.

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01:34:46.890 --> 01:34:53.580

Mike Koerber: So that's something that we have done in the past. We're currently working to update our national assessment.

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01:34:54.030 --> 01:35:04.380

Mike Koerber: Trying to provide it on a more frequent basis and trying to provide graphical tools for people to view and understand that information is something we're currently working on.

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01:35:04.890 --> 01:35:16.740

Mike Koerber: So we're hoping later this year to have updated air toxics information from a national perspective and have appropriate graphics that will make it easy for people to get in and actually use the data.

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01:35:18.780 --> 01:35:19.470

Fran Verhalen: Thanks Mike.

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01:35:19.500 --> 01:35:20.310

Fran Verhalen: I look forward to

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01:35:20.880 --> 01:35:27.210

Fran Verhalen: getting that link then, and checking it out. Sounds very intriguing. So that will be cool.

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01:35:28.770 --> 01:35:32.730

Debora Browning: It really is very intriguing. Thank you, Mike, for sharing EPA's

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01:35:33.540 --> 01:35:41.790

Debora Browning: thoughts on that. I do want to share with those that are on the phone that may not see the chat box just a little bit of explanation that was included.

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01:35:42.270 --> 01:35:52.770

Debora Browning: The Forensic Architect NGO based in London, UK, has developed a web page that looks like -- at -- that looks at environmental justice issues

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01:35:53.160 --> 01:36:01.800

Debora Browning: in Louisiana's cancer death alley as part of their website. And then the website is listed. Also as part of that

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01:36:02.550 --> 01:36:13.860

Debora Browning: web page includes a four-minute video. And basically in a nutshell, it's: Working with researchers from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Imperial College in London,

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01:36:14.760 --> 01:36:24.810

Debora Browning: FA developed a fluid dynamic simulation to track and spread a range of airborne pollutants from three dozen facilities along the Mississippi

571

01:36:25.140 --> 01:36:32.190

Debora Browning: under simulated meteorological conditions drawing on 10 years of data from a local weather station.

572

01:36:32.610 --> 01:36:48.420

Debora Browning: And their simulation reveals the scale and concentrations of chemical gassing on communities throughout Death Valley -- I want to -- Death Alley. I wanted to provide that information to those on the phone. So Fran, our next question is

573

01:36:51.900 --> 01:37:03.210

Debora Browning: from the chat box and it's, "Is the EPA planning on meetings around larger facilities near Geismar and Gonzales? Shell -- Shell

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01:37:04.020 --> 01:37:17.520

Debora Browning: BASF and Dow Louisiana operations are larger ethylene oxide emitters than Evonik. It may even affect Reserve, given the size of the facilities. Shell and BASF

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01:37:18.390 --> 01:37:35.910

Debora Browning: overlap in their impact, much like Evonik and Dow. And St. Charles overlaps to -- overlaps to impact Reserve." So the -- the question is, "Is EPA planning on meetings around larger facilities near Geismar and Gonzales?"

576

01:37:38.520 --> 01:37:41.010

Fran Verhalen: At this exact moment,

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01:37:42.420 --> 01:37:58.710

Fran Verhalen: I'm having a little bit of trouble with my Internet connection. I'm sorry. At this exact moment, EPA is not planning on -- we don't have a meeting scheduled in the Geismar area. We're --

578

01:37:59.820 --> 01:38:03.840

Fran Verhalen: You know, we're not planning anything in the next couple of months.

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01:38:05.520 --> 01:38:08.760

Fran Verhalen: However, we may revisit that

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01:38:10.140 --> 01:38:18.450

Fran Verhalen: later on as we see new risk evaluations coming out. As Mike described, we are looking at

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01:38:20.640 --> 01:38:23.550

Fran Verhalen: new risk assessments and

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01:38:24.720 --> 01:38:32.400

Fran Verhalen: updated risk assessments. So as that data becomes available, then we'll make decisions about

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01:38:34.440 --> 01:38:35.790

Fran Verhalen: good additional meetings.

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01:38:40.860 --> 01:38:56.220

Debora Browning: Fran, our next question may be referred back to an earlier comment but the question is, "EPA's problems are the 'great irregulatables.' I would like to -- I would like to explain what this means."

585

01:38:59.910 --> 01:39:01.770

Fran Verhalen: You want to repeat that one more time?

586

01:39:02.280 --> 01:39:16.260

Debora Browning: This actually comes from AJ Gomez. He's on the phone and he has his hand raised, so what I'd like to do is have Janetta check with him so he can maybe explain what he is asking.

587

01:39:17.460 --> 01:39:26.580

Janetta Coats: Yes. Mr Gonzalez, we're acknowledging your hand being raised. Could you please *6 to unmute your phone and ask your question, please?

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01:39:27.930 --> 01:39:30.810

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: Okay. I'm sorry, do you hear me now?

589

01:39:31.020 --> 01:39:32.370

Janetta Coats: Yes, we hear you. Thank you.

590

01:39:33.360 --> 01:39:35.940

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: Oh, thank you. My name is Gomez.

591

01:39:36.990 --> 01:39:37.350

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: I know -- [CHUCKLING] I've been called

592

01:39:40.080 --> 01:39:42.870

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: Speedy Gonzales and go-go-go, man.

593

01:39:45.300 --> 01:39:52.590

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: [CHUCKLING] But, Gomez. I'm AJ Gomez and I'm a member of RISE, St. James, and St. James Parish, Louisiana,

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01:39:53.430 --> 01:40:07.830

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: the afflicted area that we've been talking about so much along with St. James. I want to congratulate my good friend, Robert Taylor. He made a dynamic statement tonight. It was very, very good. But I want to say something that --

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01:40:10.080 --> 01:40:17.820

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: that I think everybody is overlooking, maybe. Democracy itself presupposes goodwill.

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01:40:19.770 --> 01:40:24.210

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: Capitalism presupposes goodwill.

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01:40:25.800 --> 01:40:31.740

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: What we have here talking about tonight presupposes goodwill.

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01:40:32.970 --> 01:40:47.640

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: There is no goodwill in people who have a product to sell, capitalism, and don't care about anything but the bottom line, which is what we all know that corporations

599

01:40:48.210 --> 01:41:09.360

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: are concerned about. Enron, the cigarette companies, all kinds of companies that -- DDT, we don't have that anymore. We've got the Roundup thing right now. People put products out on the market to make money. No goodwill at all.

600

01:41:10.860 --> 01:41:22.920

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: We -- the main problem that we have with this chemical industry are people. The reason why they set up along the Mississippi, the lower Mississippi River, first of all, is because

601

01:41:23.250 --> 01:41:27.450

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: they probably pay politicians off, number one. That's a part of it.

602

01:41:28.260 --> 01:41:42.240

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: They find locations that got the least amount of political will, the least amount of political resistance to their cause. They find everything that is weak that they can go in and walk over.

603

01:41:42.630 --> 01:42:03.540

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: But in their minds they just want to make money, the bottom line. They will pour things into the Mississippi River and the EPA or the DEQ will fine them perhaps \$500,000 for dumping it in the River. But it'll cost them \$750,000 to get rid of it by normal means.

604

01:42:04.980 --> 01:42:11.190

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: We are playing with ourselves. "The Irregulatables," is what I mentioned in my --

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01:42:12.330 --> 01:42:25.590

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: You cannot regulate people. The Bible says that the root of all evil is money. Money is the root of all evil. And that is what we are dealing with here.

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01:42:26.250 --> 01:42:37.650

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: That is what we are dealing with. Now, when you are talking about ethylene oxide and everything that it may do to people, this is getting ready to border on the criminal.

607

01:42:39.210 --> 01:42:44.730

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: That will stop that mind from working on just the bottom line.

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01:42:45.960 --> 01:42:50.550

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: People, democracy presupposes goodwill.

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01:42:51.660 --> 01:42:59.370

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: Capitalism presupposes goodwill. What we are talking about right now presupposes goodwill.

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01:43:00.600 --> 01:43:15.630

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: Goodwill has never ever in this country been something that has been foisted upon Black people. No. Not ever. Not ever. And it is not being done so now.

611

01:43:16.980 --> 01:43:19.050

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: If we continue to go like we're going -- [CHUCKLING]

612

01:43:21.540 --> 01:43:39.780

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: this country is going to dissipate into nothingness. That's what's going to happen. And I'm just asking that you all pay attention to it, because what we are dealing with are the "irregulatables." You cannot regulate ill will.

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01:43:42.060 --> 01:43:43.980

iPhone August "AJ" Gomez: That's what I have to say. Thank you.

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01:43:49.980 --> 01:43:51.330

Thank you, Mr Gomez.

615

01:43:58.080 --> 01:44:00.270

Debora Browning: Fran, the next question is,

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01:44:00.720 --> 01:44:02.010

Debora Browning: "What is the target date

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01:44:02.010 --> 01:44:04.770

Debora Browning: for achieving acceptable air quality in

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01:44:04.770 --> 01:44:05.460

Debora Browning: Reserve

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01:44:05.490 --> 01:44:06.330

Debora Browning: in terms of

620

01:44:06.360 --> 01:44:08.670

Debora Browning: ethylene oxide emissions?

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01:44:09.450 --> 01:44:10.950

Debora Browning: If there's no target date,

622

01:44:11.370 --> 01:44:13.320

Debora Browning: should residents assume that they

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01:44:13.320 --> 01:44:13.650

Debora Browning: will

624

01:44:14.040 --> 01:44:15.420

1214***162: face a cancer risk

625

01:44:15.510 --> 01:44:21.210

Debora Browning: above 100 in 1 million for the rest of their lives, as long as they reside

626

01:44:21.270 --> 01:44:22.500

1214***162: in this community and can they

627

01:44:23.700 --> 01:44:29.040

Debora Browning: provide this information so residents will know how to manage the risk.

628

01:44:32.310 --> 01:44:35.370

Fran Verhalen: That's an interesting question, um.

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01:44:37.920 --> 01:44:41.490

Fran Verhalen: I don't know that I have heard a timeline.

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01:44:43.710 --> 01:44:46.800

Fran Verhalen: Well, I have not heard a timeline yet for

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01:44:48.420 --> 01:44:51.780

Fran Verhalen: regulating ethylene oxide

632

01:44:54.120 --> 01:44:55.440

Fran Verhalen: below risk.

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01:44:57.390 --> 01:44:58.800

Fran Verhalen: I believe that was the question.

634

01:45:02.760 --> 01:45:04.260

Fran Verhalen: We are working.

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01:45:07.560 --> 01:45:13.320

Fran Verhalen: We're having conversations with Evonik to see if we can reduce the ethylene oxide emission.

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01:45:14.340 --> 01:45:23.340

Fran Verhalen: at their facility. They've already implemented several different projects that have reduced

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01:45:24.120 --> 01:45:41.400

Fran Verhalen: and controlled ethylene oxide emissions from their facility over the last several years. And they have told us that they're evaluating and looking at several more. So we'll stay in communication with them

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01:45:42.600 --> 01:45:47.430

Fran Verhalen: for that. As far as evaluating

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01:45:51.360 --> 01:45:52.350

Fran Verhalen: risk,

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01:45:58.470 --> 01:46:05.640

Fran Verhalen: sometimes -- You know, every person has a different level of risk that they're willing to accept.

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01:46:06.660 --> 01:46:10.740

Fran Verhalen: So that -- that is -- that is a challenge

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01:46:11.850 --> 01:46:22.050

Fran Verhalen: for all of us to figure out where that line is and what that means. But EPA is working to reduce the risk.

643

01:46:23.310 --> 01:46:24.900
Fran Verhalen: We do find that

644
01:46:28.830 --> 01:46:34.380
Fran Verhalen: concentrations that kick the risk above 100 million just are not

645
01:46:36.300 --> 01:46:41.550
Fran Verhalen: sustainable for human health, and so we are working toward --

646
01:46:42.930 --> 01:46:44.790
Fran Verhalen: and different avenues

647
01:46:46.620 --> 01:46:50.400
Fran Verhalen: to come up with ways to reduce that risk. And we are looking at our

648
01:46:51.420 --> 01:46:53.880
Fran Verhalen: regulations and -- and

649
01:46:54.930 --> 01:46:58.770
Fran Verhalen: working through to revise those as we need to. And then

650
01:47:00.750 --> 01:47:14.130
Fran Verhalen: we're working with the state and the different facilities to work on different projects that they can do that will lower risk, lower concentrations and emissions, so that the risk is lowered.

651
01:47:16.920 --> 01:47:37.260
JPOLK03: Fran, this is Jonna and I think that there is some really helpful information that has been posted in the chat for folks who are interested in when we expect to update regulations. So, for each of the different types of facilities and then also the timeline.

652
01:47:37.530 --> 01:47:38.220
JPOLK03: So I --

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01:47:38.250 --> 01:47:39.300
Fran Verhalen: Sure.

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01:47:39.720 --> 01:47:43.980

JPOLK03: Thanks to Jeff Robinson for posting that. I hope folks find that helpful.

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01:47:44.730 --> 01:47:50.580

Fran Verhalen: Oh, sure. I -- you know, I was thinking of the question in a little bit different manner.

656

01:47:51.780 --> 01:47:55.740

Fran Verhalen: As far as our regulations, we did put into place

657

01:47:56.940 --> 01:48:02.040

Fran Verhalen: some revisions for the MON regulation last year.

658

01:48:03.690 --> 01:48:08.130

Fran Verhalen: The commercial sterilizers, we expect to have those

659

01:48:09.390 --> 01:48:27.810

Fran Verhalen: regulations in place by the end of 2022, the hospital sterilizers by the end of 2023, and three additional rules in 2024. So that's six different rules that govern different aspects of ethylene oxide production

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01:48:29.010 --> 01:48:34.050

Fran Verhalen: over the next three years. So thanks Jonna, I hadn't thought about that question that way.

661

01:48:36.540 --> 01:48:49.770

Debora Browning: Thanks Fran, thanks Jonna, and thanks Jeff for posting those dates in the chat box for us. That was the next part of my questions and comments to provide to Fran. So thank you for bringing that out to Fran's attention.

662

01:48:50.460 --> 01:49:01.440

Debora Browning: Just as a time check, it's almost 10 'til 8. We still have several questions in the chat box and I want to ensure that we get these questions answered for community members.

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01:49:02.430 --> 01:49:11.700

Debora Browning: I wanted to first touch base with David Garcia and see if he had any additional comments before we move with the last couple of questions that we've got.

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01:49:14.190 --> 01:49:19.230

dgarcia: Debora, this David. No, I don't have any additional comments. Let's just try to get to as many questions as possible.

665

01:49:19.830 --> 01:49:20.610

Okay, great.

666

01:49:23.760 --> 01:49:33.360

Debora Browning: Fran, the next question is, "What action will EPA take to make sure ethylene oxide from Evonik and other facilities is brought down to acceptable levels?"

667

01:49:33.810 --> 01:49:47.490

Debora Browning: Will EPA work with LDEQ to make sure this happens. It's not enough just to tell us that there is an elevated risk of cancer if there is no action plan from our officials to address it."

668

01:49:48.660 --> 01:49:54.660

Fran Verhalen: It -- It -- Thank you for the question. And EPA and LDEQ are in communication

669

01:49:55.710 --> 01:50:02.580

Fran Verhalen: about the different facilities that emit ethylene oxide. Back in 2018,

670

01:50:04.170 --> 01:50:15.120

Fran Verhalen: LDEQ sent letters to every company in Louisiana that emitted ethylene oxide and asked for them to evaluate their processes

671

01:50:15.630 --> 01:50:25.560

Fran Verhalen: and look for ways to reduce ethylene oxide from their facility -- that -- ethylene oxide emissions from their facilities.

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01:50:26.250 --> 01:50:45.030

Fran Verhalen: You know -- I just talked about the regulation reviews and updates that are ongoing. So, those will impact the different facilities as rules change and we'll continue to monitor how those impacts affect the facilities in Louisiana.

673

01:50:46.620 --> 01:50:47.010

Fran Verhalen: Thank you.

674

01:50:49.050 --> 01:51:08.580

Debora Browning: Fran, the next question may need some clarification but I'll read it first to you. LDEQ lists the permitted ethylene oxide

emissions for Evonik as by the train tracks west of 19th Street at
30.072198

675

01:51:09.750 --> 01:51:17.220

Debora Browning: minus 90.57416 as the vent scrubber V dash R 122.

676

01:51:19.440 --> 01:51:28.860

Debora Browning: The actual fugitive emissions are also listed near this location, and no emissions are listed by the Evonik River Road facility.

677

01:51:30.150 --> 01:51:38.910

Fran Verhalen: Oh, okay. This goes back to the question that Wilma Subra asked earlier about the two different

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01:51:40.080 --> 01:51:53.910

Fran Verhalen: Evonik locations and addresses, and so it's just providing where the - the vent stack and the scrubber are geographically located. So that -- that's just clarification.

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01:51:54.720 --> 01:51:57.000

Fran Verhalen: Okay. Great, and thank you to the

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01:51:58.050 --> 01:51:59.610

Fran Verhalen: commenter for that information.

681

01:52:02.820 --> 01:52:16.290

Debora Browning: I'll ask one question. One more question and then I'm going to check in with Janetta. So the next question is, "Will EPA provide this community with all the documentation that supports Evonik's ethylene oxide recalculations?"

682

01:52:17.490 --> 01:52:29.760

Debora Browning: How does EPA know these new calculations are reliable, and what did Evonik do wrong when it initially calculated submissions?"

683

01:52:31.320 --> 01:52:40.140

Fran Verhalen: Oh, have to go back and check, but I don't think that Evonik submitted recalculations.

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01:52:41.460 --> 01:52:47.520

Fran Verhalen: Their reductions were through additional controls.

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01:52:48.600 --> 01:52:52.320

Fran Verhalen: They improved their leak detection system so that they were

686

01:52:53.640 --> 01:53:06.090

Fran Verhalen: finding and repairing leaks more quickly and they were monitoring to make sure that they could repair those leaks more quickly. And then they improved their --

687

01:53:08.040 --> 01:53:11.370

Fran Verhalen: the way in which their scrubber operated so that it

688

01:53:13.020 --> 01:53:26.430

Fran Verhalen: destroyed more of the ethylene oxide gas and it became more efficient. So I'm not sure that they had any recalculations that we could share.

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01:53:28.950 --> 01:53:38.310

Fran Verhalen: We'll double-check and if we need to adjust that answer when we post it, we'll add that information for you. But that's a great question. But

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01:53:40.860 --> 01:53:42.360

Fran Verhalen: I'm not remembering that Evonik

691

01:53:43.470 --> 01:53:44.310

Fran Verhalen: recalculate -- recalculated.

692

01:53:47.640 --> 01:53:54.690

Debora Browning: Thanks Fran, let's turn it over to Janetta. I believe she has a couple of messages that came in through the private chat. Janetta?

693

01:53:55.230 --> 01:53:56.430

Janetta Coats: Thank you Debora.

694

01:53:57.720 --> 01:54:12.960

Janetta Coats: One question from the private chat is, "I read in the Baton Rouge Advocate that EPA has set their cancer risk level at 0.1. Can EPA sample that low?"

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01:54:17.130 --> 01:54:27.330

Fran Verhalen: No, we cannot sample that low. Our -- The technology that exists at this time does not allow us to get accurate measurements

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01:54:28.710 --> 01:54:37.710

Fran Verhalen: at that level. We are working with our research scientists to develop

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01:54:38.880 --> 01:54:44.340

Fran Verhalen: new methodologies. We're working with some of the instrument manufacturers

698

01:54:46.350 --> 01:55:00.450

Fran Verhalen: to see if they can build new analytical equipment so that we can get down that low, so that the detectors can go that low. We are about

699

01:55:01.350 --> 01:55:13.890

Fran Verhalen: maybe halfway there, but we still have a ways to go to get reliable information. We can see it, but we are not confident that the number is accurate because it is below

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01:55:15.450 --> 01:55:20.010

Fran Verhalen: our analytical detection level for that method.

701

01:55:21.330 --> 01:55:30.900

Janetta Coats: Okay Fran, thank you. There's another private question and it states, "I understand that ethylene oxide monitoring is not required.

702

01:55:31.380 --> 01:55:46.380

Janetta Coats: But as the Director of Air Monitoring and Grants for Region 6, does Mrs. Verhalen have the resources and authority to conduct ethylene oxide monitoring for this community?"

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01:55:48.210 --> 01:56:04.980

Fran Verhalen: Well, thank you. Thank you for the question, and I am not the Director. [CHUCKLING] I appreciate the promotion, but I'm a supervisor and no, we I don't have that type of money. The money that we do

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01:56:07.230 --> 01:56:23.400

Fran Verhalen: get into Region 6 for air programs is for the entire air programs for the different state, local, and tribal agencies. So that's to run not just an air monitoring program like this, but

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01:56:24.510 --> 01:56:26.550

Fran Verhalen: the different air program

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01:56:27.720 --> 01:56:37.710

Fran Verhalen: activities throughout all of the state. So there is an opportunity right now with the American Rescue Plan.

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01:56:39.000 --> 01:56:47.760

Fran Verhalen: There are some funds that are available for a competitive grant and EPA has had

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01:56:48.900 --> 01:57:09.570

Fran Verhalen: a couple of listening sessions on that. We expect to issue the Request for Proposals in the fall. We don't -- I don't have a date yet. We haven't established the exact date, but later this fall. And community groups would be able to

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01:57:10.740 --> 01:57:12.780

Fran Verhalen: prepare a proposal

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01:57:15.360 --> 01:57:20.460

Fran Verhalen: and get money for the monitoring, but I don't have anything right now.

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01:57:21.510 --> 01:57:34.470

Fran Verhalen: So, but yes, there, there is some money that could be available through a competitive grant process and we can get more information and post that online for you.

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01:57:35.220 --> 01:57:46.110

dgarcia: Fran, this is David. Also I understand that EPA is going to be putting on a Grant 101 training course to help

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01:57:46.830 --> 01:58:03.810

dgarcia: folks understand how to submit a grant and what's needed for a grant. And I think the audience is from community members to tribal members to state agencies, so that will be available and we'll be happy to note that on our website as well.

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01:58:04.890 --> 01:58:05.520

Fran Verhalen: Thank you, David. Jonna?

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01:58:05.970 --> 01:58:15.450

JPOLK03: Yeah, sure. Can I just add one thing? And I'm sure that Gloria's - Gloria has posted - Gloria Vaughn, who was here at the very beginning,

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01:58:16.110 --> 01:58:25.230

JPOLK03: has posted her contact information. We have a listserv, or a group of folks, that we send information out to and so

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01:58:25.560 --> 01:58:30.930

JPOLK03: if you are not on that listserv already, if you want to reach out to Gloria and get on that list.

718

01:58:31.350 --> 01:58:47.520

JPOLK03: And then I'm sure she will also be sending out notices to folks about grant opportunities. And -- And so what you're saying, Fran, is that potentially folks could apply for a grant that they could use for a type of monitoring. Is that correct?

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01:58:47.700 --> 01:58:48.810

Fran Verhalen: Yes, they could.

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01:58:49.260 --> 01:58:59.310

JPOLK03: Okay. So, great. So be sure and reach out to Gloria Yvonne at her contact information and she'll send information about that later. Thanks.

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01:58:59.520 --> 01:59:03.720

Fran Verhalen: We should have some information about this in about six weeks.

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01:59:06.630 --> 01:59:07.890

Janetta Coats: Okay, thank you Fran.

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01:59:08.610 --> 01:59:10.380

Janetta Coats: Debora, if it's okay I want

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01:59:10.410 --> 01:59:10.890

to

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01:59:12.300 --> 01:59:19.410

Janetta Coats: continue with this second part of this private question and then I'll turn it back over to you after this second part. Is that okay?

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01:59:20.010 --> 01:59:21.120

Debora Browning: That's fine. Go ahead.

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01:59:21.900 --> 01:59:51.570

Janetta Coats: Okay. The question states, "What portion of Evonik's ethylene oxide reduction is on paper only? In other words, due to recalculations and -- what portion is the result of physical changes at the facility that captures ethylene oxide emissions that would not have been otherwise captured?"

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01:59:51.930 --> 01:59:59.100

Fran Verhalen: Well, thank you for the question, Janetta. That's a very good question and one that,

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02:00:00.810 --> 02:00:02.340

Fran Verhalen: as I mentioned earlier,

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02:00:03.510 --> 02:00:24.150

Fran Verhalen: to my knowledge, zero percent is a recalculation and 100% is going to be from actual emission reduction where they actually captured the emissions and sent them to their control burners.

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02:00:26.070 --> 02:00:47.460

Fran Verhalen: I'll check with Evonik and confirm that, but my understanding from the information that I have that they did not recalculate emissions. Some of the other corporations may have, but my understanding is Evonik emissions that we cited tonight were from

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02:00:49.140 --> 02:00:53.190

Fran Verhalen: emission control projects. Physical reduction of emissions.

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02:00:56.070 --> 02:00:56.610

Janetta Coats: Thank you.

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02:00:57.300 --> 02:00:57.780

Fran Verhalen: Thank you.

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02:00:59.580 --> 02:01:01.050

Janetta Coats: Fran, this is a

736

02:01:01.290 --> 02:01:15.540

Debora Browning: time check. It's eight o'clock and we still have about five questions left in the chat box. I'd like to be able to, if time allowed and, if you would like, we would like to go ahead and maybe provide a response to these questions.

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02:01:15.990 --> 02:01:25.620

Fran Verhalen: Oh sure, we will get a response. Um. It's taking us a little longer than we had hoped to get the questions and answers

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02:01:26.760 --> 02:01:42.750

Fran Verhalen: posted online. We're at about three weeks right now. We are trying to get that down to two, but we are currently looking at about three weeks for getting the questions and answers posted. We are able to post

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02:01:44.340 --> 02:01:54.360

Fran Verhalen: a copy of the video online a little bit quicker. But we are working on the questions that have been submitted so far, and we're becoming a little more efficient

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02:01:55.980 --> 02:01:59.400

Fran Verhalen: and are able to turn around a little bit quicker. But we're still

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02:02:00.960 --> 02:02:06.240

Fran Verhalen: moving through that. But we will address the questions in the chat box online if we have not

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02:02:07.470 --> 02:02:08.070

Fran Verhalen: talked about them.

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02:02:13.290 --> 02:02:17.760

Debora Browning: So what I'd like to do is take a couple more questions here.

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02:02:19.320 --> 02:02:27.990

Debora Browning: It is eight o'clock, so I don't want to extend too long past our time. But we do want to provide an answer to these important questions.

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02:02:28.290 --> 02:02:41.880

Debora Browning: The first question is, "What jobs were created through leak detection and repair and what would be the economic benefits of lowering pollution and health risk across districts do in the River parishes?"

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02:02:43.080 --> 02:02:52.290

Fran Verhalen: Um. The first part of the question, and thank you for the question, the first part of the question, I will have to send that to Evonik and get an answer.

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02:02:53.310 --> 02:02:58.140

Fran Verhalen: And as far as the reduction in

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02:02:59.460 --> 02:03:00.480

Fran Verhalen: health costs

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02:03:02.250 --> 02:03:07.110

Fran Verhalen: associated with a reduction in ethylene oxide, I don't know how to quantify that.

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02:03:08.130 --> 02:03:09.450

Fran Verhalen: But I will

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02:03:10.650 --> 02:03:16.950

Fran Verhalen: check with some experts and see if we can come up with an answer and we'll post that online.

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02:03:17.940 --> 02:03:19.860

Fran Verhalen: I'm sorry I don't have a better answer tonight, though.

753

02:03:19.980 --> 02:03:34.020

Debora Browning: No, that's okay. And then, "Is it possible for residents to detect ethylene oxide by odors or visual cues, or is the illness only an indicator for when the emissions or Passover -- are passing over our residence?"

754

02:03:34.980 --> 02:03:42.540

Fran Verhalen: Um. Definitely not. Ethylene oxide is colorless, so one would not be able to see it.

755

02:03:46.260 --> 02:04:02.670

Debora Browning: And then we - I'd like to get to these last two, last three quick questions. And "What are the new regulatory actions you are reviewing to implement, and what is the timeline of these updated regulations to protect citizens as soon as possible?"

756

02:04:16.230 --> 02:04:16.890

Debora Browning: Fran, are you there?

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02:04:19.440 --> 02:04:23.580

Janetta Coats: I think she froze, Debora. She looked froze.

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02:04:25.080 --> 02:04:25.770

Debora Browning: Yes. Uh-oh. Hmm.

759

02:04:45.240 --> 02:04:45.900

Debora Browning: Tom? Janetta?

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02:04:56.670 --> 02:04:57.660

Janetta Coats: I'm here, I'm here.

761

02:04:58.050 --> 02:05:10.950

Debora Browning: Okay, I don't know if anybody else can hear me, but Tom Ruiz, our production manager, has lost Internet connection and the Zoom meeting has ended, unfortunately.

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02:05:13.080 --> 02:05:13.620

Oh, no.

763

02:05:15.030 --> 02:05:15.330

Gloria Vaughn: For some people.

764

02:05:16.200 --> 02:05:17.790

Debora Browning: Yeah, let's see if

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02:05:18.180 --> 02:05:19.620

Debora Browning: Tom can resume back.

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02:05:21.270 --> 02:05:23.790

Debora Browning: We'll wait, just a few minutes.

767

02:05:33.510 --> 02:05:38.430

Janetta Coats: Well, Tom is really good at this stuff. So, um, if this can be done, he can do it.

768

02:05:43.110 --> 02:05:48.540

Debora Browning: We don't have Fran yet for any answering questions. We lost Fran and Tom.

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02:05:52.470 --> 02:05:53.460

Janetta Coats: Okay.

770

02:05:54.840 --> 02:05:58.110

Janetta Coats: So, by chance would

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02:05:59.190 --> 02:06:01.770

Janetta Coats: headquarters be able to answer any questions do you think, Debora?

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02:06:03.030 --> 02:06:07.770

Debora Browning: I'm not sure. Mike, would you be able to answer some questions if you're still online?

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02:06:08.130 --> 02:06:13.200

Mike Koerber: I'm here. I'd be happy to step in for Fran. I was just hoping we'd get her in a minute or two.

774

02:06:13.830 --> 02:06:18.390

Jeff Robinson: Hey Mike, I think -- I think everyone got kicked off and so I'm

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02:06:20.070 --> 02:06:20.430

Jeff Robinson: not

776

02:06:20.880 --> 02:06:21.810

Jeff Robinson: sure where we were. So --

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02:06:23.550 --> 02:06:25.080

Janetta Coats: Well, it is showing 87

778

02:06:25.260 --> 02:06:26.280

Janetta Coats: participants here.

779

02:06:26.580 --> 02:06:26.880

Jeff Robinson: Okay.

780

02:06:26.910 --> 02:06:42.480

Debora Browning: We got -- We have still quite a few participants, and so what I'd like to do is go ahead and ask maybe a couple of questions and maybe Mike or Jeff might be able to answer the questions. There's only a few more left.

781

02:06:43.440 --> 02:06:44.730

Mike Koerber: Sure, let's give it -- let's give it a go.

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02:06:45.180 --> 02:07:01.710

Debora Browning: Okay and if Fran gets on she can jump in, of course. The next question is, "What are the new regulatory actions you are reviewing to implement and what is the timeline of these updated regulations to protect citizens as soon as possible?"

783

02:07:02.400 --> 02:07:18.210

Mike Koerber: Yeah, hi. This is my Mike Koerber. So Jeff Robinson conveniently did post at 8:09 in the chat box of this of the various rules that EPA is currently reviewing and updating, along with the timeline.

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02:07:18.690 --> 02:07:37.380

Mike Koerber: And as Fran indicated earlier, there are a total of six rules in play here, one of which we finished last year in 2020. And the other five rules, we will be completing or the next two to three years. But further specifics are in Jeff's response he posted at 8:09 in the chat box.

785

02:07:38.160 --> 02:07:39.210

Debora Browning: Great, thanks Mike.

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02:07:40.920 --> 02:07:48.600

Jeff Robinson: And that'll be 7:09 Central. So it's showing up as 8:09 for Mike and probably 7:09 for everyone else.

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02:07:50.430 --> 02:07:51.030

Mike Koerber: Thank you, Jeff.

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02:07:51.330 --> 02:07:51.960

Sure.

789

02:07:54.210 --> 02:07:57.390

1214***083: Hey Jeff, I think I'm back on, at least on the phone.

790

02:07:58.320 --> 02:07:58.710

Okay.

791

02:07:59.910 --> 02:08:03.330

1214***622: We have a couple more minutes. Maybe we can go through one or two more questions, then.

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02:08:04.620 --> 02:08:06.000

1214***622: So we can respect everybody's time.

793

02:08:06.930 --> 02:08:25.530

Debora Browning: Absolutely. Fran, if you can hear me the question is, "I understand -- I understand that Formosa is allowed to add 70% of the claimed ethylene oxide reductions right back into Louisiana air. What are EPA's plans to address the serious problem?"

794

02:08:27.450 --> 02:08:45.210

1214***083: I appreciate the question, but we're here tonight to talk about ethylene oxide emissions from Evonik and I did not prepare for talk about any other facility. Sorry about that. We will see about getting an answer online.

795

02:08:49.140 --> 02:08:50.250

1214***083: But thank you for the question.

796

02:08:51.390 --> 02:08:54.480

Debora Browning: Fran, the next question is, "Are there any updates on when

797

02:08:54.870 --> 02:08:55.110

I.

798

02:08:56.310 --> 02:09:00.330

Debora Browning: updated modeled NATA cancer risk and emission data?"

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02:09:02.910 --> 02:09:03.690

1214***083: Sure.

800

02:09:05.700 --> 02:09:06.030

1214***083: We

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02:09:07.590 --> 02:09:08.580

Debora Browning: have an echo.

802

02:09:15.150 --> 02:09:17.010

1214***083: Okay Debora, let me see if this works better.

803

02:09:17.280 --> 02:09:17.940

Debora Browning: Much better.

804

02:09:19.080 --> 02:09:19.470

1214***083: Okay.

805

02:09:22.170 --> 02:09:31.260

1214****083: At this time, EPA is planning on releasing a risk assessment

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02:09:33.030 --> 02:09:35.700

1214****083: at the end of this year.

807

02:09:45.420 --> 02:09:46.410

Debora Browning: Fran, I cannot hear you.

808

02:09:51.030 --> 02:09:51.690

1214****083: All right, Debora.

809

02:09:54.630 --> 02:09:56.430

1214****083: Okay, I muted.

810

02:09:58.290 --> 02:10:05.550

1214****083: But EPA is looking at a different type of risk assessment that the national ambient --

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02:10:06.630 --> 02:10:08.160

1214****083: National Air Toxics Assessment --

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02:10:10.230 --> 02:10:34.230

1214****083: Is -- We're revising how we're doing those risks, so it will be a little bit different and we should be able to issue one at the end of this year for the emission inventory information from 2017. And then in the spring of next year we're going to try to issue

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02:10:35.790 --> 02:10:39.600

1214****083: the risk for emissions from 2018.

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02:10:41.130 --> 02:10:48.870

1214****083: And thereafter we will be doing a risk assessment each year and working on

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02:10:49.920 --> 02:10:55.860

1214****083: getting the information out more quickly than we did with the NATA. Thanks.

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02:11:01.710 --> 02:11:12.630

Debora Browning: Fran, our last question is, "Did Evonik perform and submit results of stack tests to confirm increased ethylene oxide emission capture?"

817
02:11:18.840 --> 02:11:19.800
1214****083: Thank you for the question.

818
02:11:22.020 --> 02:11:22.830
1214****083: I am not

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02:11:23.880 --> 02:11:44.250
1214****083: confident of the answer. It is my understanding that they did a stack test and it would have been submitted. I will have to get with Evonik and confirm that and so we'll make sure that that gets back into the question the online question-and-answer.

820
02:11:45.600 --> 02:11:55.860
1214****083: But it is my understanding that they did do a stack test, and if they did, that that information would have been submitted. It'd be submitted to Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, so

821
02:11:57.810 --> 02:11:59.700
1214****083: it should be out on EDMS.

822
02:12:04.380 --> 02:12:18.060
Debora Browning: Right. Thank you, Fran, for your responses to all these questions, and thank you to our community members and to everyone that provided the questions in the chat box. And particularly, we want to thank you for your patience during our technical difficulties.

823
02:12:18.390 --> 02:12:26.790
Debora Browning: EPA would like to thank you for attending the meeting on the ethylene oxide near Evonik Corporation facility in Reserve, Louisiana.

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02:12:27.270 --> 02:12:37.800
Debora Browning: And as a reminder to submit your additional questions to the EPA Region 6 email box R6EthyleneOxide@epa.gov.

825
02:12:38.250 --> 02:12:45.180
Debora Browning: EPA will provide a response to your email, so be sure to include your contact information with your question or comments.

826
02:12:46.110 --> 02:12:56.820
Debora Browning: For those without computer access or who are unable to submit written questions, verbal requests for additional information can be made by contacting Gloria Vaughn,

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02:12:57.120 --> 02:13:16.260

Debora Browning: EPA Associate Director for Environmental Justice, by calling 214-665-7535. All news media inquiries should be directed to the EPA Region 6 press office at R6Press@epa.gov.

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02:13:18.030 --> 02:13:31.320

Debora Browning: This concludes the meeting, and this event has been recorded. EPA will post the recording along with the Q&A's to the EPA Region 6 websites for ethylene oxide. Written transcriptions

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02:13:31.350 --> 02:13:33.870

Debora Browning: of this recording in English and Spanish will

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02:13:33.870 --> 02:13:46.740

Debora Browning: also be posted to the EPA website. EPA would like to thank the interpreters for their services this evening. And lastly and most importantly, EPA would like to thank you for participating. Good evening.

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02:13:48.390 --> 02:13:50.700

1214***622: Thank you, Debora. Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Fran.

832

02:13:52.410 --> 02:13:54.180

1214***083: Sure enough. Thank you.