

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 6, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Cathy Stepp
Region 5 Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Dear Administrator Stepp,

We call upon you to ensure that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region V office is using the full extent of its enforcement authority under the Clean Air Act (CAA) to address the harms caused by handling of high concentrate manganese on Chicago's Southeast Side. Specifically, we urge you to seek injunctive relief and secure civil penalties from any facility that EPA finds has violated our State and National air protections. We also urge you to give this environmental justice community special consideration for Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), as well as continue to monitor for particulate matter (PM) and metals, including manganese, throughout the community. These are critical steps towards eliminating the burden of pollution this community has experienced for far too long.

Earlier this year Watco Transloading, LLC (Watco), a facility that operates on the Southeast Side of Chicago and has historically handled manganese, ended its handling of the metal after receiving a Notice of Violation from EPA. This announcement was of critical importance to the Southeast Side because Watco, as well as S.H. Bell less than 3 miles away, had been found to be emitting high levels of manganese into the neighboring community. This discovery was made after EPA required both facilities to install air monitors in response to community concerns.

We commend the action EPA Region V took to require air monitors at Watco and S.H. Bell. These air monitors led to the discovery that the Southeast Side has been experiencing dangerous levels of manganese pollution, pollution that likely has been going on for years. Although recent monitoring of S.H. Bell shows manganese levels that are less than the minimal risk level for chronic inhalation exposure to manganese, we are concerned that this company may receive the manganese that would otherwise be handled by Watco. Thus, we urge EPA to include all necessary controls for manganese and a long-term plan to monitor for manganese at S.H. Bell as part of the injunctive relief for this facility, along with civil penalties and SEPs.

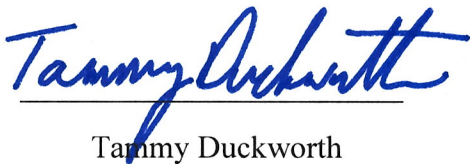
Although we appreciate Watco making a decision that will impact future levels of pollution, we urge EPA to fully address any ongoing manganese threat from this site and the legacy of pollution that exists in the area. For example, in addition to the soil investigation and remediation that EPA is conducting at homes on the Southeast Side, EPA should require Watco to address any remaining

manganese on its site built up from years if not decades of handling the material to ensure the material does not continue blowing into the surrounding area. EPA must also seek penalties, as appropriate, at any facility found to be violating our environmental and public health protections. In addition to ensuring that companies who pollute our communities are held fully responsible for their actions, EPA can also provide the Southeast Side with opportunities for SEPs. SEPs are an important tool for providing benefits to an area impacted by the facility's violations.

According to EPA, air-borne manganese can lead to permanent neurological disorders. The risk is even greater for children, unborn babies and nursing infants—thousands of whom call the Southeast Side home. Exposure to high concentrations of manganese can affect brain development, including changes in behavior and decreases in learning and memory capacities. Your time and attention to this matter will help ensure that the community in this area is confident that their public health is a top priority for Region V and that they are being protected from these grave health risks.

We thank you for your attention to this request.

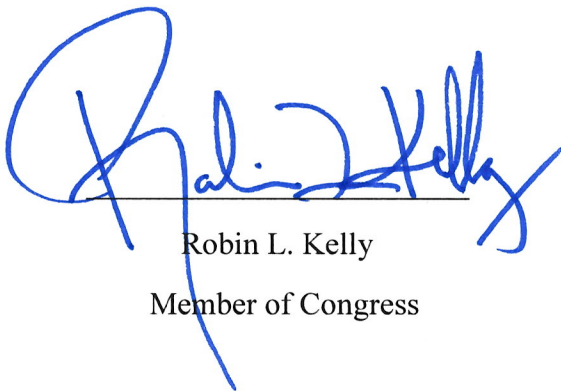
Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress