

Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee.

Today, I want to talk to you about ethylene oxide or “ETO.”

EtO is an industrial chemical used to sterilize medical devices. It is also used as an intermediary chemical to make industrial products like anti-freeze.

EtO was determined to be a known carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December 2016. As a result, the EPA included EtO in its regular National Air Toxic Assessment, which helped identify communities that faced high exposure to the chemical.

Two of those communities are in my district, Gurnee and Waukegan. And there are dozens of communities around the country that face high EtO emissions, from the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia, to Allentown, Pennsylvania, and the bayou of Louisiana.

Since the EPA made public its data on affected communities, I have been pushing the agency to conduct ambient air monitoring in my district—similar to what the Agency did in Willowbrook, IL. Only through ambient air monitoring can my constituents be sure that the air they were breathing was safe.

The EPA refused.

I am deeply thankful that this subcommittee stepped up last year—in the absence of EPA leadership—and increased funding for the EPA’s compliance account, making particular note of communities facing high EtO levels and the importance of ambient air monitoring.

While this funding did not make it into the final omnibus, I am deeply thankful for this subcommittee’s leadership on EtO.

Now, the EPA is promulgating two rules on EtO. Thankfully, my local county public health department, in coordination with the Illinois EPA, stepped up and has been conducting ambient air monitoring in our area. However, not all communities around the country have the resources to conduct similar air testing, underscoring how important this funding remains for dozens of communities around the country.

Further highlighting why this funding is so important has been EPA’s approach to EtO rulemaking. EPA has insisted that computer modeling is sufficient and does not intend to conduct any ambient air monitoring as part of its rulemaking.

However, the experience of the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook proves the shortsightedness of this approach. It was not until *after* EPA conducted air monitoring in Willowbrook that we discovered how significant a contributor fugitive emissions were to the community’s exposure.

When conducting its computer modeling for EtO, EPA has to input variables for its estimates of fugitive emissions. As we saw in Willowbrook, estimates are not a full picture of fugitive

emissions and EPA cannot fully take into account fugitive emissions without ambient air monitoring. All the more reason why funding for ambient air monitoring is essential to inform any sensible regulation of EtO.

This subcommittee has been immensely helpful with EtO. We still need your support.

Ambient air monitoring is the only way to assure our communities known to be facing high EtO emissions that the air they breathe is safe. And it must play an integral role in EPA's rulemaking—especially given the shortcomings of computer modeling.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I yield back.