From: Franklin, Kathy
To: Belke, Jim
Subject: RE: Wash Post: No timetable for end to fire at Texas chemical facility
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2019 11:45:17 AM

That is great news.

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From: Belke, Jim
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2019 11:42 AM
To: Franklin, Kathy <Franklin.Kathy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Wash Post: No timetable for end to fire at Texas chemical facility

Latest EOC report says that all fires were extinguished by last night at 3:00 am.

From: Franklin, Kathy
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2019 11:33 AM
To: OLEM OEM RID <OLEM_OEM_RID@epa.gov>
Subject: Wash Post: No timetable for end to fire at Texas chemical facility

National

No timetable for end to fire at Texas chemical facility

By **Juan A. Lozano**

March 19 at 7:32 PM

HOUSTON — Officials said Tuesday they're not sure when a two-day-old fire at a Houston-area petrochemical storage facility will burn itself out, but they expressed confidence that the air quality is safe despite huge plumes of smoke.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said at a news conference that monitors show the levels of contaminants in the air are safe and that the plume coming from the site in Deer Park, southeast of Houston, is reaching at least 4,000 feet and staying high enough that the air quality at ground level is safe.

"It's understandable why people would be scared," said Hidalgo, the county's top administrator. "We're sharing information with the public so that everybody knows what we know, what we're doing and where we're headed."

The plume could carry particulates as high as 6,200 feet, officials said, but fog is forecast for the area Wednesday morning and could drag the plume downward, making the air quality more hazardous. "We're prepared for any contingency," Hidalgo said.

The fire that began Sunday at the Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC) remained intense enough Tuesday to create its own micro weather system, causing shifting winds in the area, officials said.

Firefighters continue to battle the petrochemical fire at Intercontinental Terminals Company. (Godofredo A. Vasquez/AP)

The head of the county's health department, Dr. Umair Shah, said "there continues to be low risk to our community," but vulnerable groups such as the elderly and pregnant women should be cautious.

The company said Tuesday that five petrochemical tanks at the site were still burning, three others that had been on fire had burned out, and two tanks that didn't have anything in them had collapsed.

Firefighters are using water and foam to try to prevent the blaze from spreading to five other tanks. A drop in water pressure allowed the fire to intensify overnight and spread to two additional tanks, but the pressure later normalized, authorities said.

The tanks contain components of gasoline and materials used in nail polish remover, glues and paint thinner.

A passerby watches the plume of smoke caused by the petrochemical fire at the Intercontinental Terminals Company. (Godofredo A. Vasquez/AP)

Officials previously said the fire could have burned itself out by Wednesday, but they scrapped that

timetable on Tuesday.
ITC spokeswoman Alice Richardson said the company was “working our hardest to get this current incident under control.”
“Of course ITC is very sorry. … This isn’t an event we wanted,” a teary-eyed Richardson said during a news conference Tuesday.
The school districts in Deer Park and in nearby La Porte canceled classes Monday but reopened Tuesday, albeit with restrictions on outdoor activities.

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