Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 10, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Kurt Thiede
Region 5 Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Dear Administrator Thiede:

We write to urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 Office to immediately test air emissions at hazardous waste incinerators including the Veolia facility in Sauget, manufacturing facilities and other industrial sources known to emit per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in Illinois. While Illinois EPA is currently conducting testing for PFAS in Illinois water systems with Region 5's assistance, we know that water is not the only pathway of exposure. That is why additional information is needed to determine the full extent of exposure risk in Illinois and we urge Region 5 to provide this support.

Earlier this year an independent report published by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) identified Chicago and the Quad Cities as communities with PFAS contamination in drinking water.[1]Since then, PFAS has also been detected in the ground water at Scott Air Force Base at levels well above EPA's screening level of 40 parts per trillion. This is the level EPA is recommended public health officials use to determine if further attention at a site is required.

As you know, PFAS is known as a "forever chemical" that does not break down when released into the environment and PFAS chemicals build up in our bodies where they can stay for decades. PFAS substances have been linked to a number of health issues, including certain cancers, reproductive harms, and reduced effectiveness of vaccines, which is a dangerous threat to the health and safety of our constituents.

We are deeply concerned about the threat that PFAS contamination poses to our constituents and public health in this region. With Region 5's leadership, testing air emissions for PFAS at facilities known to produce these emissions will help to inform our Offices and constituents on the risks that PFAS contamination poses to our state from additional sources.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

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[1] 1. https://www.ewg.org/research/national-pfas-testing/

Sincerely,

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress