Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 20, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

We write to express our concerns regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to address the U.S. Smelter and Lead Superfund Site in the City of East Chicago's Calumet neighborhood. We have great appreciation for EPA's previous work to help clean up the spoilage of our industrial heritage in Northwest Indiana, including the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal, the Grand Calumet River, and sundry Superfund sites. While recognizing that each cleanup effort is unique, complicated, and difficult to achieve, we must express our serious disappointment with the agency's haphazard response and apparent lack of urgency in addressing the U.S. Smelter and Lead Superfund Site, which has perpetuated a sense of confusion among local residents.

EPA has understandably been focusing the majority of its work in the U.S. Smelter and Lead Superfund Site on addressing the contaminated soil and its consequences within the project boundaries, and we appreciate EPA's concern regarding the potential impact its work may have on individuals living in homes where soil removal is taking place. The method by which the agency has released information to the city and the public, however, has created a sense of confusion in East Chicago, which we believe was preventable.

While we have concerns about the pace with which information about the levels of soil contamination at the site was collected and shared with impacted residents, we appreciated the agency's ability and willingness to work with us and local officials to develop a plan that will as quickly as feasible relocate West Calumet Housing Complex residents and remediate soil for other impacted residents.

We are seriously concerned, however, about the agency's approach to recent water quality tests for some residents. Because EPA only tested 45 homes and the initial results show water quality for 18 properties may have elevated lead levels, among the other approximate 1,000 properties there is now a level of anxiety created among every potentially impacted resident. We believe it is EPA's responsibility to conduct basic water quality tests for everyone living in Zones 2 and 3 to ensure our constituents health and to assuage their not unreasoned fears.

Perhaps more concerning, the residents living in the 18 homes that presented elevated lead in their water have not been provided the point source for this pollution, they have only been told that the water may be unsafe. These residents have no conclusive answer as to whether the source of the lead is within their homes, within exterior lateral lines, or within the water mains. Your agency has indicated that the City of East Chicago has met every federal standard

for water quality at its filtration plant and that the city is not responsible for this problem. Given the passions excited by the agency's handling of its testing, however, this fact has not been adequately articulated. We believe EPA has a responsibility to determine the potential source of lead for each of the 18 identified properties and any additional properties which demonstrate elevated lead in the test results.

Finally, EPA continued to exacerbate this sense of crisis within the Superfund Site when its on-the-ground coordination team abruptly vacated their offices in East Chicago on December 9th, while the residents were being notified of the potential water quality issued. The Mayor, the City Council, the Superintendent of the School City of East Chicago, and we were given no notification or warning that as of December 9th, the coordination center at Carrie Gosch Elementary School would no longer be open and available to residents.

We trust in receiving a prompt, positive, and active response to this communication.

Sincerely,

Congressman Peter J. Visclosky

Senator Joe Donnelly

Senator-Elect Todd C Young