Short Testimony

Good morning Chairman Nevárez, Chairman Lozano, and fellow Committee members. I am David Gray, Acting Regional Administrator for EPA Region 6, which covers the State of Texas, as well as Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and 66 Tribal Nations. I am here today to speak directly about EPA's response to the Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC or Responsible Party) tank fire. Thank you for inviting me to testify today.

On March 17, 2019, EPA deployed a Federal On-Scene Coordinator to oversee the Responsible Party's response to the tank fire. EPA joined the TCEQ, the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Harris County Pollution Control Services, and ITC in Unified Command to respond to this incident.

On March 23, 2019, in consultation with TCEQ, EPA issued the Responsible Party an Administrative Order requiring the facility to comply with a broad Scope of Work, prescribing such efforts as securing the facility to prevent further discharge of chemicals, conducting spill response, and removal of the discharged chemicals and efforts to prevent further hazardous air releases. As of today, EPA continues to oversee ITC's efforts to carry out the work pursuant to that Administrative Order.

Some of our highlighted efforts include forming air monitoring strike teams that mobilize and collect over 1,000 instantaneous air monitor readings downwind and around the ITC facility and gather approximately 120 water samples in the Tucker Bayou and Houston Ship Channel. We share this information with the State of Texas and local officials to provide information to use for local decisions and actions.

ED_002627_00014261-00001

Short Testimony

Key aspects to ensuring a successful response, including:

- **Exercises:** EPA plans for emergency events by conducting exercises to prepare.
- **Coordination:** EPA cultivates our long-standing cooperative relationship with the State of Texas and other emergency response agencies by keeping the lines of communication open.
- **Experienced Staff:** An effective response requires experienced responders who can address unforeseen circumstances swiftly and effectively, and the necessity of proficient responders should not be underestimated.
- **Right Equipment:** During the ITC fire response, EPA deployed assets to assist with response efforts that were not available elsewhere, including the Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) and the Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft for air sampling. EPA assets remain activated as the Agency continues to respond to the ITC fire.

We are utilizing the tools available to us and are taking additional steps to make data available to the public. One way we are keeping the public informed is through the Story Map Resource, which was created by EPA, in coordination with the TCEQ. The Story Map shows sampling data by location, allowing the public to see what is being measured in their community.

While each response has its own unique challenges, we remain flexible to address individual needs. I am very proud of EPA and other responders when called to duty in these times of need. I am happy to answer any questions about this great collaborative effort.

ED_002627_00014261-00002