TAMMY BALDWIN
WISCONSIN

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 6, 2018

Andrew Wheeler
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Cathy Stepp
Regional Administrator – Region 5
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building
77 West Jackson Blvd
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler and Administrator Stepp:

I am writing regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) investigation into Greif Inc., also known as Mid-America Steel Drum Company Inc., and its facilities in Wisconsin. Following accounts from a whistleblower and reporting by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that exposed dangerous operations at three of the company's industrial container refurbishing sites in southeast Wisconsin, I called for the EPA to launch an investigation.

EPA opened an investigation, and in November 2017 the agency issued preliminary Notices of Violation, but after nine months, we are still waiting for the results of EPA's investigation. While multiple agencies have found dozens of violations at the site, the EPA has not completed its investigation or provided the public confidence that the illegal practices have ended. There are many health hazards related to the violations documented at these sites, and the community and workers deserve answers about what has happened and assurances that they are no longer being exposed to toxic chemicals.

As extensively reported by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for nearly two years, Greif Inc., the operator of chemical container refurbishing facilities in Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and St. Francis, Wisconsin, has been under investigation by multiple federal agencies including the EPA. The agencies have investigated the company for transporting, storing and treating hazardous waste without required licenses, as well as not taking appropriate measures to protect its workers or the surrounding communities from these hazardous materials. Given the severity of these allegations and the seriousness of their potential impact on the health of local residents, I am deeply concerned that the EPA has not taken swift, substantial action to protect local residents by addressing the company's negligence.

After an initial investigation, in November 2017 your agency issued Notices of Violation to Greif Inc. for alleged violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Clean Air Act. Preliminary reports of the violations are deeply troubling, including the largely unmitigated incineration of hazardous waste at the facility in Oak Creek, failure to comply with standards for controlling volatile organic compounds, and resistance to cooperate with the EPA's investigation. These initial conclusions suggest that both workers and nearby residents have

suffered the toxic and dangerous consequences of unsafe, illegal handling and disposal of toxic chemicals by Greif Inc. for an extended period of time.

It has been nine months since the EPA issued the initial Notices of Violation, and neither I nor the public have been advised of any new progress in the investigation since then. As the agency responsible for enforcing laws that protect human and environmental health, I am deeply concerned that the EPA has not taken further action to finalize the investigation, stop these reckless practices, and hold the violator accountable to federal environmental laws. The public's health depends on holding Greif Inc. accountable to the law. Residents of Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and St. Francis deserve a swift, clear, response from the EPA proportional to the substantial threat that Greif Inc.'s actions have imposed upon their health and wellbeing. As such, I ask that you immediately increase the speed and transparency of your investigation into the company's practices in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator