TAMMY BALDWIN
WISCONSIN

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

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 7, 2018

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

Dear Administrator Stepp:

As the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues its investigation into the operations of Greif/Mid-America facilities in Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and St. Francis, Wisconsin, I write to urge you to expand air monitoring and your engagement with communities surrounding these sites. EPA should continue working with St. Francis to ensure the community understands the health risks it faces, but I am calling on you to expand your air monitoring efforts to Oak Creek and Milwaukee as well. Investigations by the EPA and other state and federal agencies have exposed a pattern of dangerous operations at these facilities, and the residents living in the surrounding communities should know the risks they are facing as long-term investigations continue.

Residents, workers, and their health care providers ought to have accurate information about ongoing exposures to chemicals from these facilities. I urge you to work with the local municipalities, local leaders, and neighborhood groups to establish testing protocols and agreements for how the emissions and exposure information can be presented to be most useful to the public.

Many residents have questions about the health implications of living near these facilities, including the developmental risks to children from exposure to chemicals. Answers to these questions are especially critical given the pattern of violation of environmental laws at the sites, including alleged violations of emissions controls and protocols for the handling of hazardous and toxic substances. I urge you to ensure residents near the sites have accurate and thorough information about health risks related to these exposures, potential symptoms, and recommended steps if they do experience symptoms of exposure. Further, I urge you to work with relevant local, state, and federal health entities to ensure residents have up to date resources available should they experience symptoms or wish to seek care.

Finally, I urge you to engage with the local community to ensure residents understand their rights under federal law, including related to violations of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.

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The Environmental Protection Agency has played an important role investigating these serious concerns. As your investigation continues, these steps can help to address the many concerns that have emerged in our communities. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to these requests. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator