UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C., 20460

OFFICE OF
ENFORCEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

AUG - 3 2017

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cassidy:

Thank you for your letter of May 12, 2017, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. We share your interest in maintaining jobs in the carbon black manufacturing industry in the United States and agree that the law should be fairly and evenly applied to all carbon black plants in the United States.

Your letter references ongoing enforcement matters that involve, among other things, claims based upon the long-standing rules under the Clean Air Act regarding New Source Review. While we cannot address the status of enforcement actions or settlement discussions involving any particular company, we are working with the relevant parties, and we are aware of the importance of maintaining a fair and even playing field.

In 2007, as part of an effort to focus on environmental problems where federal enforcement efforts can make a difference, the EPA initiated investigation of the carbon black manufacturing sector. The EPA worked closely with our state partners in Louisiana, Alabama and Oklahoma to achieve two settlements, which we believe will achieve significant public health and environmental benefits for the communities surrounding these facilities. When fully implemented, the settlements will result in substantial reductions in emissions of particulates, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, pollutants that have been linked to negative impacts on the environment and human health, including susceptibility to respiratory infections and asthma attacks.

We remain committed to working with the other carbon black companies to ensure full compliance with the law, including installation of required pollution controls, by all carbon black manufacturing facilities in the United States. We recognize the significant environmental and financial commitment of Cabot and Continental. We have recently met with both companies to more fully understand their concerns.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, or your staff may contact Carolyn Levine in EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at Levine.Carolyn@epa.gov or (202) 564-1859.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Starfield
Acting Assistant Administrator