

Illinois House Environment and Energy Cmte. Testimony
DuPage County Chairman Dan Cronin
10.26.2018

Thank you Chairman Sente for hosting today's meeting.

Mayor Trilla and I are here to help you understand the human toll the Sterigenics facility and information about its emissions are causing our community.

At the end of August 2018, DuPage County, Willowbrook and surrounding communities were made aware of air sampling completed by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). This document was posted online. It concluded that an increase in cancer risk may exist in the area surrounding the Sterigenics facility, due to exposure to ethylene oxide, or ETO. This chemical is, by some reports, a known carcinogen, and had been emitted into the air by Sterigenics which uses ethylene oxide to sterilize medical equipment.

Since that time, the 19,000 people who live, work and go to school near this facility, have been seeking answers to their many questions regarding their own health and safety. The National Institutes of Health's webpage on ethylene oxide, or ETO, says that lymphoma and leukemia are the two most commonly-caused forms of cancer among those who work in these facilities. Our residents believe they are at risk, due to the information they heard this summer from the ATSDR.

Put yourself in their shoes. Sterigenics has not engaged with residents to reassure or educate them about the operations of the facility. Local officials, like Mayor Trilla and I are trying to intercede. However, getting the information people need has not been easy. We've been on what seems like countless phone calls with federal and state scientists who can't seem to tell us anything definitively. I traveled to Washington, D.C. in September to find some answers. But I'm here now with many of the same questions I had then. As a result I've joined Mayor Trilla in asking all state officials on both sides of the aisle, to shut down the operations of Sterigenics until it can be proven that the air our residents breathe is safe.

Please...if you could...help us find out on behalf of the people we serve...

- 1) Can we determine whether results of stack and ambient air testing will provide us with definitive answers about our ability to safely breathe the air?

- 2) Should we test our water for ethylene oxide by-products such as ethylene glycol? What are the safety standards and will the state EPA lead this effort?
- 3) Are building materials and soil at residents' homes and businesses impacted by ethylene oxide or its by products? Do folks need to tear out their carpet or rip down their walls? You have understand, that's where this conversation is now. People are desperate for information and imagining the worst. They deserve credible information from a trustworthy source that they can understand.

The soonest we appear to be able to hope for some credible information appears to be November 29th, when the U.S. E.P.A. has agreed to provide answers at a community meeting in Willowbrook. I hope our appearance here today lights a fire under those charged with our environmental safety. I'd like to see a plan to answer residents' questions and effectively communicate in an open, responsive and transparent manner moving forward.