



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2018

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Illinois EPA Refers Sterigenics to Attorney General for Enforcement

Agency Seeks Immediate Injunctive Relief Against Company

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Alec Messina has referred an enforcement action to the Illinois Attorney General’s Office against Sterigenics US, LLC (Sterigenics) based on the findings of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in its Letter Health Consultation and on information provided by U.S. EPA. The Agency is seeking an order enjoining Sterigenics from continuing operations that result in any emissions of ethylene oxide either until a complete review of additional modeling and risk assessment is completed by U.S. EPA or until U.S. EPA otherwise assures the community that resumed operations would not present an elevated health risk.

Sterigenics is a commercial sterilizer that primarily uses ethylene oxide (EtO) to sterilize medical equipment. It operates in two buildings at 7775 Quincy Street and 830 Midway in Willowbrook.

As part of the process for assessing new cancer risk assumptions nationwide, U.S. EPA chose to evaluate the implications of the recently updated Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) at the Sterigenics facility in Willowbrook. U.S. EPA provided that data to ATSDR, and ATSDR concluded, in an August 21, 2018 report, that “if measured and modeled data represent typical EtO ambient concentrations in the air, *an elevated cancer risk exists* for residents and off-site workers in the Willowbrook community surrounding the Sterigenics facility.”

On September 28, 2018, Illinois officials and local community representatives met with U.S. EPA to discuss the status of U.S. EPA’s ongoing evaluation and testing at Sterigenics. While progress has been made, it is evident that additional weeks or months will pass before U.S. EPA will be in a position to provide an updated risk assessment and propose any resulting changes to relevant regulations. The lack of certainty continues to raise public concern. In addition, the September 28 meeting increased that concern due to information discussed. In particular, the August 21 ATSDR report referenced a “30-fold increase in cancer potency,” but at the September 28 meeting, U.S. EPA referenced a 60-fold increase.

In the referral, the Illinois EPA cited the findings of the ATSDR Letter Health Consultation and information provided at the September 28 meeting with U.S. EPA. In addition to the Agency requesting an order enjoining Sterigenics from continuing operations, the Agency requests, as an alternative, the Attorney General’s Office pursue a violation of Section 9(a) of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act. Illinois EPA also requests Sterigenics pursue EtO emission limits for the Willowbrook facility that would be memorialized in an amended permit.

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