

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2020

**VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Kurt Thiede  
Region 5 Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Dear Administrator Thiede:

We urge you to exercise your authority under Section 114 of the Clean Air Act to require the four facilities at 11600 South Burley Street in Chicago, which are part of the Reserve Management Group operating under South Chicago Property Management (SCPM), to install Federal Equivalent Method real-time PM10 and Federal Reference Method filter-based air monitors to ensure that their noxious emissions are being appropriately characterized and controlled. We also ask that you take all necessary steps within your authority to ensure that these facilities, as well as a fifth facility currently operating at 11600 South Burley and the proposed "GIII" facility to be located at the same address, will not cause a hazard to the surrounding community. Doing so will further assure the community that the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is able to deliver on its commitment to addressing the environmental injustices that have been borne by the communities on the Southeast Side of Chicago.

The community on the Southeast Side adjacent to these facilities has long borne a heavy cumulative burden from multiple industrial facilities operating next to homes, parks, schools, and the Calumet River. Residents have been particularly concerned about high levels of airborne heavy metals at the Washington High School air monitor located roughly a half-mile to the East of 11600 S Burley. This monitor, sited adjacent to a park as well, has for many years registered the highest levels of several harmful metals in the state.

More recently, the community has been deeply concerned with the proposed move of the General Iron facility from Lincoln Park to this already over-burdened environmental justice area. The General Iron facility has for years faced numerous community complaints of burning metallic odors, explosions, and dispersion of dust and auto "fluff" into the community, consistent with recent inspection reports from the Chicago Department of Public Health and the growing body of science on the impacts of metals recycling facilities. It is also the subject of an enforcement action by EPA over uncontrolled shredder emissions and fugitive dust.

Southeast Side resident concern over this facility's move to the community is especially heightened because it has come to light that the "host" site for General Iron's move is already occupied by the SCPM facilities and one other company, some of which have been for years operating without air approvals and proper oversight. Their failure to abide by the law has likely resulted in legacy contamination of the soil and water in the surrounding area, based on evidence of pollution contained in the City of Chicago's inspection database, along with the direct emissions of the operations themselves. Both Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and the City of Chicago have found these facilities to be in violation of air requirements. Yet, neither agency has required air monitoring that history in this community has shown is crucial to identifying and addressing threats to public health and the environment. That is why it is critical that EPA use its resources to require monitors at these facilities now, ensuring that your technical experts and enforcement offices as well as the community have the information they need to protect public health.

We are also concerned by the ongoing failure to evaluate fully SCPM's four Burley facilities, the fifth facility at 11600 South Burley and the proposed relocated General Iron as a single source of emissions for permitting purposes. IEPA has acknowledged that the SCPM facilities and proposed new facility are a single source for air permitting purposes, the agency is moving forward with permitting the proposed new facility on a separate track from its permitting of the four other SCPM facilities. Indeed, IEPA noticed a draft permit for the proposed new facility on March 30 – notably while the state is under a shelter-in-place order – even though it has not yet made a determination on the permit for the four SCPM facilities. This action by IEPA makes it even more imperative that monitoring of the SCPM facilities happens as soon as possible in order for the data to be incorporated into the permitting process. Moreover, the permitting process is EPA's primary opportunity to assess the impacts of a facility's operations on a community and is not simply an administrative exercise. Here EPA also has an opportunity (and indeed responsibility) to look at the collective impacts of multiple co-located facilities. If EPA does not abide by its permit oversight role, we fear that the activities of these facilities will not be properly characterized, regulated and controlled, thus failing to protect the community.

We thank you again for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



---

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



---

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator