

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Judith Enck
Region 2 Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
290 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Administrator Enck:

We write to share our deep concerns over the recent discovery of 1,4 Dioxane, a probable human carcinogen, at the Superfund site in Ringwood, New Jersey. For decades now, Ringwood area residents have been the victims of a series of public health failures—from the dumping of toxic sludge into abandoned mine pits starting in the 1960s to the failed cleanup and premature delisting of the site from the National Priorities List in the 1990s. The residents of this community deserve both a full remediation of their community, and full transparency from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during this process.

As EPA investigates this newly discovered toxin, protecting the drinking water supply and the public health of the surrounding community is paramount. While we understand that EPA has not detected 1,4 Dioxane in any drinking water sources and it does not believe it presents a significant or imminent threat to human health, we strongly urge your agency to continue monitoring for the contaminant in the groundwater, surface water, and drinking water supply to ensure that no public health threat emerges in the future. We request that you keep both the public and our offices apprised of these efforts on an ongoing and regular basis.

Beyond EPA's technical and scientific work, open dialogue with the community is fundamental to the success of the Superfund program. While the presence of 1,4 Dioxane was known to EPA in November 2015, the release of this information to the public from EPA did not occur until March 2016. Even in instances where EPA determines that there is no believed immediate threat to public health, it is imperative that communities are made aware of developments concerning the discovery of new contaminants in a timely manner.

Transparency and pro-active information sharing by the EPA is not only critical for the residents of Ringwood, but for those living near any of the other 112 Superfund sites throughout New Jersey.. In order to improve the openness of EPA's community outreach procedures, we request that you consider conducting a full review of your region's public disclosure practices as it relates to the Superfund program. We believe this review should:

- Examine your region's adherence to any statutory or regulatory community right-to-know requirements;
- Assess the potential for improvements to any formal or informal public notification procedures;

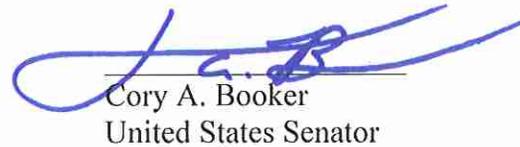
- Include discussions with affected stakeholders to better understand community concerns with your region's communication regarding Superfund sites;
- Be undertaken with the goal of increasing transparency and providing information to the public in a timely and effective manner; and
- Include any recommendations for improvements to the community outreach process that can be made under your existing authority, or that would require action from Congress.

The Superfund program is about more than just the scientific, legal, and engineering expertise needed to complete a site remediation—it is about restoring public confidence in the health and safety of their community. We thank you for your agency's dedication to these matters and your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator