

EPA Administrator Wheeler Responds to Office of Inspector General Report on Ethylene Oxide

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler released the following statement regarding EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) [report](#) on the agency's outreach to communities impacted by Ethylene Oxide (EtO).

“The tone and substance of this report indicates a disconnect in the US EPA IG's office,” **said Administrator Wheeler**. “Most surprising is that in our final meeting with the IG's office on this matter they provided no indication that there would be any unresolved issues. As a result, we are formally requesting the EPA IG rescind the report so it can be appropriately updated.”

US EPA has been vigorously working with all manner of impacted communities and stakeholders potentially impacted by ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions. The agency headquarters and regional staff have been keeping them regularly updated as we make progress on a number of fronts, which include the following:

- On November 1, 2019, the agency signed proposed amendments to its air toxics emissions standards for miscellaneous organic chemical manufacturing. The proposal published in the Federal Register on December 17, 2019.
- EPA held two public hearings on the proposal: on January 14, 2020 in Houston, TX and on January 16, 2020 in Washington, DC. The public comment period has been extended to March 19, 2020. The court-ordered deadline is May 29, 2020.
- On December 5, 2019, we issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit information from industry and the public on a potential future rulemaking to further reduce EtO from commercial sterilization and fumigation operations. EPA expects to propose a rulemaking in Summer 2020.
- We also issued a request to gather information from several commercial sterilization companies on facility characteristics, control devices, work practices and costs for emission reductions.
- In response to the need to communicate risk, the Agency recently appointed a risk communication advisor at EPA Headquarters to consult on all risk communication involving ethylene-oxide.
- The work done by this new EPA career staffer supplements the work already underway in this area being done by the Office of Air Quality, Planning, and Standards.
- We are also working closely with state-led monitoring efforts and providing in-person assistance from EPA experts.