

My name is Lisa Nurnberger Snyder. I live about two miles from two Elite Spice plants that use ethylene oxide to sterilize spices and dehydrated vegetables. According to the EPA, ethylene oxide emissions from both plants exceed the federal cancer risk threshold and contribute to elevated cancer risks in the community.

I learned these plants were in my backyard when my organization, the Union of Concerned Scientist, released a report looking at communities impacted by ethylene oxide pollution from commercial sterilizers.

Baltimore is the only metro area in the country that has two sterilizer plants that each emit ethylene oxide at levels the EPA found contributes to elevated community cancer risks. Three of the 23 sterilizers on EPA's national list of high-risk facilities are in Maryland.

The cancer risk around the Jessup plant is 40 cases per one million people, twice the national average. Ethylene oxide makes up about one-third of the cancer risk from toxic air pollutants in Jessup.

The cancer risk around the Hanover plant is just slightly lower -- at 30 cases per one million people.

And these estimates do not account for other sources of pollution or stressors that can increase the risk of getting cancer.

Like me, the people who live or work around these plants had no idea the plants were releasing this cancer-causing gas. For the past 15 years I've been bike riding less than a mile from both plants.

Furthermore, workers at these facilities may face extremely dangerous occupational exposures if ethylene oxide continues to be used.

Elite Spice opened in 1988. They installed scrubbers in 2014 to reduce emissions. Yet there are still fugitive emissions being released from the facilities, as evidenced by EPA's 2022 assessment. My community has been subjected to enough ethylene oxide. Consider if you lived or worked next to one of these plants. Wouldn't you say, enough is enough?

It's time to protect the residents of this state who have been unknowingly living with this risk.

I urge the committee to vote FAVORABLE on Senate Bill 916.