

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.

Chronic exposure to this gas is associated with cancers of white blood cells, such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, as well as breast cancer in women. Children are especially vulnerable -- EtO exposure can make them susceptible to DNA mutations. EPA's own science confirms that ethylene oxide is extremely toxic to breathe.

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.

I learned that Baltimore is in fact the only metro area in the country that has **two** sterilizer plants that each emit ethylene oxide at levels that 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. The area around the Hanover plant is 30 cases per one million people. Ethylene oxide makes up about one-third of the cancer risk from toxic air pollutants in Jessup. And these estimates do not account for other sources of pollution or stressors that can increase people's risk of developing cancer.

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

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 worked or lived next to one of these plants. Especially if you had a child. Wouldn't you say, enough is enough?

The EPA is developing regulations to reduce these emissions, but there is no reason for these plants to be using ethylene oxide because alternatives exist. The European Union bans the importation of spices sterilized with ethylene oxide, primarily because the material can remain in the product. Meanwhile, McCormick uses steam to sterilize all of the spices we buy off the shelf here in the US. Furthermore, workers at these facilities may face extremely dangerous occupational exposures if ethylene oxide continues to be used.

It's time to protect the residents of this state who have had to unknowingly live with this risk for far too long.

As a result, I respectfully urge members of the committee to vote FAVORABLE on Senate Bill 916. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and thanks to Sen. Beidle for working to protect the people of Maryland.