

Ethylene Oxide Update: November 11, 2019

The Village of Gurnee continues to work with county, state and federal officials to address concerns regarding the use of the chemical ethylene oxide (EtO), at Vantage Specialty, Inc. facility located at 3938 Porett Drive, Gurnee. Mayor Kristina Kovarik remains in regular communication with county, state and federal officials to share the concerns of the community and to receive agency and legislative updates. The following developments and communications have occurred since the last formal Village update provided on November 5, 2019:

Illinois General Assembly: The following is an update on HB3888. As a reminder, Vantage Specialty, Inc. is NOT a sterilizer.

- **HB3888 – Introduced September 13, 2019 – Representative Mayfield**

HB3888 is scheduled to be heard before the Senate Executive Committee on Wednesday, November 13th. HB 3888 has been amended two times since being introduced. As currently drafted it creates a variety of definitions and regulations related to sterilizers and manufacturers that use EtO.

Residents interested in filing a Witness Slip indicating their position on this proposed piece of legislation are encouraged to do so by November 13, 2019 at:

<http://my.ilga.gov/WitnessSlip/Create/121973?committeeHearingId=17489&LegislationId=121973&LegislationDocumentId=154973>

A summary of HB3888 can be viewed here:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=3888&GAID=15&GA=101&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=121973&SessionID=108>

The process for how a bill becomes a law in Illinois can be viewed here: http://www.ilga.gov/commission/lis/98bill_law.pdf

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): On November 6, 2019 the EPA updated its website containing information on EtO.

<https://www.epa.gov/hazardous-air-pollutants-ethylene-oxide/ethylene-oxide-updates>

According to its update, the EPA has worked to understand background levels of EtO. After analyzing results from longstanding monitoring locations across the country, in both rural and urban areas, the EPA confirmed the presence of ethylene oxide, with six-month averages ranging from 0.2 to about 0.4 micrograms per cubic meter. The information was gathered from 18 monitoring sites in nine states between October 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019. The two closest monitoring sites to Lake County are located in Chicago and Northbrook. The Chicago site average over the 6-month period was 0.365 micrograms per cubic meter, the Northbrook site average was 0.294 micrograms per cubic meters. The data results can be viewed at:

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-11/documents/data_summary_stations.pdf

Commenting on the findings of background levels between 0.2 to 0.4 micrograms per cubic meter, the EPA stated “We believe that there is no immediate, short-term risk from the levels of ethylene oxide found in these limited air monitoring data. There is a need to better understand low levels of ethylene oxide over a longer-term period. EPA will continue to collect information from its existing air monitoring networks and share data as it becomes available. To this end, EPA has added ethylene oxide to the list of air toxics that will be routinely monitored at all 34 sites in the NATTS and UATMP networks. Because ethylene oxide can be difficult to analyze, the Agency will provide training for states that use their own laboratories to assist them as they begin analyzing air quality samples for this pollutant. Data from future monitoring will be available in EPA’s Air Quality System database after quality assurance is complete.” - <https://www.epa.gov/hazardous-air-pollutants-ethylene-oxide/ethylene-oxide-updates>

Based on sampling conducted between June 6, 2019 – July 7, 2019 by GHD Services on behalf of the Lake County Health Department and Village of Gurnee, as well as separate sampling conducted by GHD Services for Vantage Specialty Inc. over the same time period, the following averages and medians have been calculated:

Average and median if “non-detect” results are assigned a value of .072 micrograms per cubic meter (method detection limit):

Average: 0.243 micrograms per cubic meter.

Median: 0.17 micrograms per cubic meter.

Average and Median if “non-detect” results were removed from calculations:

Average: 0.301 micrograms per cubic meter.

Median: 0.22 micrograms per cubic meter.

The data used to calculate these figures can be found at:

[Gurnee Air Sampling Results – Non-detects Assigned Value of Detection Limit](#)

[Gurnee Air Sampling Results – Non-detects Excluded](#)

You can find additional information on ethylene oxide and follow all updates from the Village of Gurnee on the topic here: www.gurnee.il.us/EtO