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May 3, 2017

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

It is with urgency that I request a call and briefing from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding a public health situation in my congressional district brought to my attention by California's South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

On April 28, 2017, the SCAQMD notified me of their intention to test for the possible release of toxic air emissions in and around Compton and Lynwood, California, specifically they want to test for hexavalent chromium or chromium 6 which is listed by the EPA as a human carcinogen. This is the same cancer-causing pollutant that was recently found in neighboring Paramount, California at hexavalent chrome facilities. SCAQMD reports that preliminary testing has indicated a higher than normal total chrome level in certain clusters. They would like to install monitoring devices to better assess the situation yet are short on monitoring devices and resources. I am told the earliest possible time to install the devices would be three weeks.

As you are aware, just last year, monitoring devices deployed by the SCAQMD found chromium 6 at more than 350 times of the acceptable levels in Paramount. I do not want another child to be handed an asthma inhaler or another person to be diagnosed with lung cancer because of the slow or inadequate response of air regulators.

At this time, I request that the EPA take the following first steps:

- Provide me with a briefing of the situation;
- Determine if the EPA can offer SCAQMD or the affected municipalities the support, funding or monitoring devices needed to properly locate and determine which facilities are emitting these toxic emissions;
- If facilities are emitting chromium 6 at higher than acceptable levels and they are identified, the EPA should immediately take all necessary actions to eliminate the threat of endangering the public health, which may include full or partial suspension of these facilities;

This news could be extremely troubling for residents in the mostly minority community whose homes neighbor an array of metal platers and finishing shops.

Please do not let another day go by without investigating this matter. It is extremely concerning to me that with every breath the residents living near these facilities take, they may be unknowingly inhaling toxic chemicals. I urge you to take the necessary action immediately so that the public has the correct information on exactly what it is they are breathing and to remediate this potential disaster.

Sincerely,



Nanette Diaz Barragán
U.S. Representative
California's 44th Congressional District