

Advocates for Environmental Human Rights * Air Alliance Houston * Alaska Community Action on Toxics * Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments * American Friends Service Committee WV Economic Justice Project * Arizona Public Interest Research Group * Asian Pacific Environmental Network * Athens County Fracking Action Network * Basel Action Network * Beyond Pesticides * BlueGreen Alliance * Breast Cancer Fund * California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG) * Center for Community Change * Center for Effective Government * Center for Environmental Health * Center for Health, Environment & Justice * Center for International Environmental Law * Citizens' Environmental Coalition * City Councilwoman, City of Wilmington, Delaware * Clean Air Coalition of Western New York * Clean Air Council * Clean and Healthy New York * Clean Production Action * Clean Water Action * Clean Water Action, New Jersey * Clean Water Action, Michigan * Clean Water Action, Maryland * Clean Water Action, Pennsylvania * Clean Water Action, Rhode Island * Clean Water Action, Connecticut * Clean Water Action, California * Clean Water Action, Colorado * Clean Water Action, Florida * Clean Water Action Alliance of Massachusetts * Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota * Colorado Public Interest Research Group (CoPIRG) * Coming Clean * Communications Workers of America * Concerned Citizens of Wagon Mound and Mora County * Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG) * Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club * Delaware Concerned Residents For Environmental Justice * Delaware Interfaith Power & Light * Deep South Center for Environmental Justice * Diesel Health Project * Earthjustice * EcoHermanas * Ecology Center * Environment America * Environment Texas * Environmental Defense Fund * Environmental Health Strategy Center/Prevent Harm * Environmental Justice Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform * Environmental Working Group * Farmworker Association of Florida * Friends of the Earth * GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives * Global Community Monitor * Green America * Green For All * Green Science Policy Institute * GreenCAPE * Greenpeace * Healthy Building Network * Henry S. Cole Environmental Associates, Inc. * Illinois PIRG * International Brotherhood of Teamsters * International Campaign for Responsible Technology * International Chemical Workers Union Council * Investor Environmental Health Network * Just Transition Alliance * Kanawha Forest Coalition * Kentucky Environmental Foundation * Las Pistoleras Institute cultural de Arte * League of Conservation Voters * Learning Disabilities Association of Maine * Life Support Project * Los Jardines Institute * Louisiana Bucket Brigade * Maryland PIRG * Minority Workforce Development Coalition * Moms Clean Air Force * Mossville Environmental Action Now * Moveon.org * National Council for Occupational Safety and Health * Natural Resources Defense Council * Nature's Friends * New Jersey State Industrial Union Council * NJ Work Environment Council * Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance * Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition * Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) * People Concerned About Chemical Safety * Pesticide Action Network North America * Physicians for Social Responsibility * Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine Chapter * Physicians for Social Responsibility of Greater Kansas * Physicians for Social Responsibility, Arizona * Public Citizen (Texas) * Public Citizen * Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia * REACT (Rubbertown Emergency ACTION) * Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families * San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, Physicians for Social Responsibility * Science and Environmental Health Network * Second Look * Service Employees International Union * Sierra Club * Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter * Southwest Workers Union * Steps Coalition * Story of Stuff Project * Texas Campaign for the Environment * Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (T.E.J.A.S.) * Texas Injured Workers * Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility * Texas Public Interest Research Group (TexPIRG) * The Praxis Project * The Steelworkers' Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health, Safety and Environmental Education * U.S. Public Interest Research Group * Union of Concerned Scientists * United Steelworkers * UPROSE * Washington Physicians for

Social Responsibility * WE ACT for Environmental Justice * West County Toxics Coalition * West Virginia Citizen Action Group * West Virginia Council of Churches * West Virginia Environmental Council * West Virginia Healthy Kids And Families Coalition * West Virginia Highlands Conservancy * West Virginia Rivers Coalition * West Virginia Surface Owners' Rights Organization * West Virginia Sustainable Business Council * Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG) * WV FREE

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

March 19, 2015

Dear Mr. President:

We write to strongly urge you to take prompt and decisive action to address a danger you have highlighted for a decade – the threat to our communities and workers from accidents or deliberate attacks on U.S. chemical plants. Your Administration is running out of time to make a real difference on this critical issue.

We were grateful when, after the tragic West, Texas disaster in April 2013, you issued Executive Order (EO) 13650, “Improving Chemical Facility Safety and Security,” that directed federal agencies to modernize safety regulations. As a result, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering revisions to its Risk Management Program (RMP) regulation, but has postponed proposing changes until September. We believe that this schedule will jeopardize finalizing a rule before you leave office and therefore needs to be accelerated.

Your past leadership on preventing chemical disasters has been unparalleled. The millions of men, woman and children living, studying, playing and working within high risk zones near hundreds of chemical facilities are counting on you to prevent future tragedies. To ensure that new rules do take effect, they must be finalized well in advance of the end of your administration’s term in office.

EPA’s RMP data, first reported in 1999, exposed the overwhelming danger of these hazards to workers, first responders, children, and surrounding communities. In 2006, as a U.S. Senator, you stated emphatically that **“these plants are stationary weapons of mass destruction spread all across the country.”** According to a December 2014 Congressional Research Service analysis, 466 of these facilities each put 100,000 or more people at risk of a catastrophic disaster.

Fortunately, safer cost-effective chemical processes are widely available. Since 2001, hundreds of chemical facilities have switched to safer chemical processes and eliminated these risks to 40 million people in 47 states. For example, in 2012, the Clorox Company completed conversion of all of its U.S. facilities to a safer manufacturing process. While this is encouraging, reliance solely on voluntary efforts has left more than 100 million people in the U.S. at risk of death or

injury because they live and work inside “vulnerability zones” surrounding the high-risk chemical facilities.

Section 112(r)(7)(A) of the Clean Air Act provides the EPA with rule-making authority to prevent future tragedies by requiring chemical facility owners and operators to use, where feasible, safer processes that will reduce or eliminate the potential for a catastrophic chemical incident. Safer processes are the only foolproof way to eliminate or dramatically reduce the loss of human life in such an event, whether it is triggered by an accident, natural disaster, or terrorism.

These catastrophic hazards became obvious following the 9/11 attacks and after every attack since. In 2002, the EPA under then-Administrator Christine Todd Whitman proposed using the Clean Air Act’s disaster prevention authority to make chemical facilities ***“inherently safer by reducing quantities of hazardous chemicals handled or stored, substituting less hazardous chemicals for extremely hazardous ones, or otherwise modifying the design of processes to reduce or eliminate chemical hazards.”*** Tragically, the Bush administration, under pressure from special interest lobbyists, scuttled this proposal.

In your 2008 book *Change We Can Believe In* you promised, ***“An Obama Administration will...[s]ecure our chemical plants by setting a clear set of federal regulations that all plants must follow, including improving barriers, containment, mitigation and safety training, and wherever possible, using safer technology, such as less toxic chemicals.”***

On April 3, 2012, Governor Whitman wrote EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson urging the use of ***“authorities you can apply to reduce these hazards before a tragedy of historic proportions occurs.”*** And following the West, Texas, disaster, then-EPA Administrator Jackson told MSNBC, ***“We need to use the authority we have now.”***

Due to the billions of dollars of potential liability, the Association of American Railroads issued a statement in 2008 saying: ***“It’s time for the big chemical companies to do their part to help protect America. They should stop manufacturing dangerous chemicals when safer substitutes are available...”*** More recently, the U.S. Chemical Safety Board recommended in its May 1, 2014 final report on the 2010 Tesoro refinery disaster that the EPA issue new rules under the Agency’s Clean Air Act authority

We respectfully urge you to use your authority to expedite finalizing a rule that will eliminate these potentially catastrophic hazards wherever feasible. As organizations committed to this objective, we look to your office to ensure that this critical rule is finalized as soon as possible.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Kristen Breitweiser
9/11 Widow

**Advocates for Environmental Human
Rights**

Monique Harden

Adrian Shelley

Air Alliance Houston

Pamela K. Miller
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Katie Huffling
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Rick Wilson
**American Friends Service Committee
WV Economic Justice Project**

Diane E. Brown
Arizona Public Interest Research Group

Miya Yoshitani
Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Heather Cantino
Athens County Fracking Action Network

Jim Puckett
Basel Action Network

Jay Feldman
Beyond Pesticides

Charlotte Brody
BlueGreen Alliance

Jeanne Rizzo, R.N.
Breast Cancer Fund

Emily Rusch
**California Public Interest Research
Group (CalPIRG)**

Steve Savner
Center for Community Change

Katherine McFate
Center for Effective Government

Michael Green
Center for Environmental Health

Lois Marie Gibbs
**Center for Health, Environment &
Justice**

Carroll Muffett

**Center for International Environmental
Law**

Barbara Warren, RN, MS
Citizens' Environmental Coalition

Maria D. Cabrera
**City Councilwoman, City of Wilmington,
Delaware**

Erin Heaney
Clean Air Coalition of Western New York

Saleem Chapman
Clean Air Council

Kathleen A. Curtis, LPN
Clean and Healthy New York

Mark Rossi, PhD
Clean Production Action

Robert Wendelgass
Clean Water Action

Amy Goldsmith
Clean Water Action, New Jersey

Nic Clark
Clean Water Action, Michigan

Andy Galli
Clean Water Action, Maryland

Myron Arnowitt
Clean Water Action, Pennsylvania

Meg Kerr
Clean Water Action, Rhode Island

Anne Hulick
Clean Water Action, Connecticut

Andria Ventura
Clean Water Action, California

Sara Lu
Clean Water Action, Colorado

Kathy Aterno
Clean Water Action, Florida

Elizabeth Saunders
**Clean Water Action Alliance of
Massachusetts**

Deanna White
**Clean Water Action Alliance of
Minnesota**

Danny Katz
**Colorado Public Interest Research Group
(CoPIRG)**

Judy Robinson
Coming Clean

David Le Grande
Communications Workers of America

Sofia Martinez
**Concerned Citizens of Wagon Mound and
Mora County**

Evan Preston
**Connecticut Public Interest Research
Group (ConnPIRG)**

Amy Roe, Ph.D.
Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club

Paulyne A Webster
**Delaware Concerned Residents For
Environmental Justice**

Lisa Locke
Delaware Interfaith Power & Light

Beverly Wright, Ph.D.
**Deep South Center for Environmental
Justice**

Eric Kirkendall
Diesel Health Project

Dr. Robert D. Bullard
Environmental Justice Leader

Trip Van Noppen
Earthjustice

Angela Adrar
EcoHermanas

Jeff Gearhart
Ecology Center

Margie Alt
Environment America

Luke Metzger
Environment Texas

Richard A. Denison, Ph.D.
Environmental Defense Fund

Emma Halas-O'Connor
**Environmental Health Strategy
Center/Prevent Harm**

Michele Roberts
**Environmental Justice Health Alliance
for Chemical Policy Reform**

Renee C. Sharp
Environmental Working Group

Jeannie Economos
Farmworker Association of Florida

David Halperin
**Former Staff Member, National Security
Council & Senate Intelligence Committee**

Gerald Poje, PhD
**Founding Member, U.S. Chemical Safety
Board**

Erich Pica
Friends of the Earth

Monica Wilson
**GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator
Alternatives**

Denny Larson
Global Community Monitor

Fran Teplitz
Green America

Jeremy Hays
Green For All

Arlene Blum, PhD
Green Science Policy Institute

Sue Phelan
GreenCAPE

Annie Leonard
Greenpeace

Bill Walsh
Healthy Building Network

Henry S. Cole, Ph.D
**Henry S. Cole Environmental Associates,
Inc.**

Abe Scarr
Illinois PIRG

Sam Loesche
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Ted Smith
**International Campaign for Responsible
Technology**

John Morawetz
**International Chemical Workers Union
Council**

Sanford Lewis
Investor Environmental Health Network

José T. Bravo
Just Transition Alliance

Chad Cordell
Kanawha Forest Coalition

Heather Warman
Kentucky Environmental Foundation

Dr. Theresa Cordova
Las Pistoleras Institute cultural de Arte

Tiernan Sittenfeld
League of Conservation Voters

Tracy Gregoire
**Learning Disabilities Association of
Maine**

**LT. General Russel Honore, US Army
(Ret)**

Karen Savage
Life Support Project

Richard Moore
Los Jardines Institute

Anne Rolfes
Louisiana Bucket Brigade

**Major General Randy Manner, US Army
(Ret)**

Emily Scarr
Maryland PIRG

Ken and Penny Dryden
**Minority Workforce Development
Coalition**

Trisha Sheehan
Moms Clean Air Force

Dorothy Felix
Mossville Environmental Action Now

Anna Galland
Moveon.org

Mary Vogel
**National Council for Occupational Safety
and Health**

Scott Slesinger
Natural Resources Defense Council

Rev. M. Dele
Nature's Friends

Carol E. Gay
**New Jersey State Industrial Union
Council**

Janice Selinger
NJ Work Environment Council

Niaz Dorry
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Janet Keating
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Dave Rosenfeld
**Oregon State Public Interest Research
Group (OSPIRG)**

Maya Nye
People Concerned About Chemical Safety

Judy Hatcher
Pesticide Action Network North America

Kathy Attar
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Karen A D'Andrea
**Physicians for Social Responsibility
Maine Chapter**

Richard Gibson
**Physicians for Social Responsibility of
Greater Kansas**

Barbara H. Warren, MD, MPH
**Physicians for Social Responsibility,
Arizona**

Peter Orris, MD, MPH
Professor and Chief of Service,
Occupational and Environmental Medicine,
University of Illinois Hospital and Health
Sciences System

Laura Punnett, Sc.D.
Professor, Dept. of Work Environment, &
UML Distinguished University Professor
(2013-16), University of Massachusetts
Lowell

Rena Steinzor
Professor, University of Maryland Law
School and President, Center for Progressive
Reform

Tom Smith
Public Citizen (Texas)

Tyson Slocum
Public Citizen

Amy Laura Cahn
**Public Interest Law Center of
Philadelphia**

Eboni Cochran
**REACT (Rubbertown Emergency
ACTion)**

Liz Hitchcock
Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families

Robert M. Gould, MD
**San Francisco Bay Area Chapter,
Physicians for Social Responsibility**

Ted Schettler
**Science and Environmental Health
Network**

Deborah Moore
Second Look

Jon Barton
Service Employees International Union

Terry McGuire
Sierra Club

Neil Carman, PhD
Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter

Diana Lopez
Southwest Workers Union

Jennifer Crosslin
Steps Coalition

Michael O'Heaney
Story of Stuff Project

Robin Schneider
Texas Campaign for the Environment

Juan Parras
**Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy
Services (T.E.J.A.S.)**

Diane Wilson
Texas Injured Workers

Anjum Hanafi, MPH
Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility

Sara E. Smith, JD
**Texas Public Interest Research Group
(TexPIRG)**

James Trice
The Praxis Project

Kristina Mazzocchi, Esq.
**The Steelworkers' Tony Mazzocchi
Center for Health, Safety and
Environmental Education**

Andre Delattre
U.S. Public Interest Research Group

Yogin Kothari
Union of Concerned Scientists

Michael J. Wright
United Steelworkers

Elizabeth C. Yeampierre
UPROSE

Bruce Amundson, MD
**Washington Physicians for Social
Responsibility**

Cecil Corbin-Mark
WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Dr. Henry Clark
West County Toxics Coalition

Gary Zuckett

West Virginia Citizen Action Group

Jeffrey S. Allen
West Virginia Council of Churches

Bill Price
West Virginia Environmental Council

Carey Jo Grace
**West Virginia Healthy Kids And Families
Coalition**

Cynthia D. Ellis
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy

Angie Rosser
West Virginia Rivers Coalition

Julie Archer
**West Virginia Surface Owners' Rights
Organization**

Jen Burns
**West Virginia Sustainable Business
Council**

Peter Skopec
**Wisconsin Public Interest Research
Group (WISPIRG)**

Ciera Pennington
WV FREE

CC:

Senator Barbara Boxer

Senator Edward Markey

Senator Tom Udall

Senator Cory Booker

Representative Frank Pallone

Gina McCarthy, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency