

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

I write to express my deep concern regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal to significantly weaken or even repeal key portions of “Accidental Release Prevention” regulations for facilities subject to the Risk Management Program. These safeguards apply to refineries, chemical manufacturers, agricultural distributors, water treatment plants, and food and beverage processors that store or use highly hazardous chemicals.¹

Congress established the Risk Management Program (RMP) in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments with a clear directive: prevent catastrophic chemical accidents and protect workers, first responders, and surrounding communities. These regulations require facilities containing high-risk hazardous materials to not only respond to disasters but also actively prevent them through safer technology assessments, transparency, and emergency preparedness.

Between 2016 and 2020, nearly 100 reportable chemical accidents occurred annually at RMP facilities nationwide.² These incidents resulted in worker fatalities, thousands of injuries, and billions of dollars in property damage.³ To address these issues, the EPA adopted a rule in 2024 requiring safer technology and alternatives analyses (STAA), independent audits following serious accidents, improved emergency coordination, and greater access to hazard information for nearby residents. The rule strengthened public access to Risk Management Program information, including online access to key hazard information, replacing an outdated system that often restricted information to in-person reading rooms.⁴

The recent proposal formulated by the EPA under your guidance will roll back progress and reverse common-sense protections. The proposal would eliminate requirements for certain facilities to assess safer technologies, rescind mandates for facilities to proactively share chemical hazard information with nearby communities, and weaken provisions requiring facilities to consider heightened risks from flooding and extreme weather events. It would also drop the requirement that refineries using hydrofluoric acid evaluate the feasibility of safer alternatives, despite the well-documented lethality of that substance even at low concentrations.

Illinoisians will face direct consequences from this shortsighted policy change. From January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2025, there have been over 6,000 hazardous material incidents in Illinois, including

¹ “EPA targets Biden-era chemical accident prevention regs.” *Politico*, 14 Feb. 2026, <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2026/02/epa-targets-biden-era-chemical-accident-prevention-regs-pro-00780823>

² “Clean Air Act Risk Management Program.” *The Environmental Protection Agency*, Sep. 2022, <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-09/RMP%20SCCAP%20Proposed%20Rule%20Summary%20Presentation.pdf>

³ “Safer Communities by Chemical Accident Prevention RMP Rule Update.” *California Certified Unified Program Agency Forum*, March 24, 2025. <https://www.calcupa.org/CMS15/upload-manager/presentations/CUPA-2025/6312-21257-m-a5-safer-communities-by-chemical-accident-prevention-rmp-rule-update-becker.pdf>

⁴ “EPA targets Biden-era chemical accident prevention regs.” *Politico*, 14 Feb. 2026, <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2026/02/epa-targets-biden-era-chemical-accident-prevention-regs-pro-00780823>

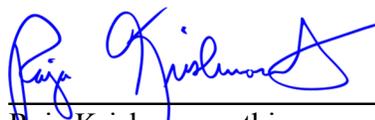
chemical releases, biohazards, and other public safety considerations.⁵ Hundreds of thousands of residents in Illinois live in a chemical vulnerability zone, exposed to highly toxic chemicals like hydrofluoric acid, benzene, and chlorine.⁶ These areas often encompass schools, hospitals, densely populated neighborhoods, and predominantly impact marginalized communities.⁷ The patients, children, and seniors living in these impacted areas rely on the EPA to prevent these incidents from happening in the first place.

This proposal also follows other troubling signals regarding EPA's commitment to public health protections, including reconsideration of the asbestos ban, approval of additional PFAS-related chemicals, and plans to weaken multiple air and water quality standards. Taken together, these actions raise serious concerns that the agency is retreating from its core mission to protect human health and the environment.

Given these facts, I respectfully request responses to the following questions by March 13th, 2026:

1. How does the proposed rollback align with Congress's directive in the Clean Air Act to prevent accidental releases of hazardous substances?
 2. How many RMP facilities has the EPA identified in Illinois that would be affected by the EPA's change in regulation?
 3. What evidence demonstrates that eliminating safer technology assessments will not increase the likelihood or severity of catastrophic chemical incidents?
 4. How will nearby residents and first responders obtain timely and actionable hazard information if facilities are no longer required to provide it online or readily?
 5. What analysis has EPA conducted regarding the impact of these rollbacks on underserved and rural communities?
 6. How does EPA reconcile its current proposal with its statutory obligation to protect public health?
- I urge you to reconsider this course of action and uphold the protections that keep American families safe.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

⁵ "Hazardous Materials Incident Report." *Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security*, n.d. <https://public.iema.state.il.us/FOIAHazmatSearch/>

⁶ "Needless Risk: Oil Refineries and Hazard Reduction." *The U.S. Public Interest Research Group*, Aug. 2005. https://pirg.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Needless_Risk_USPIRG.pdf; "Toxic 100 Air Polluters." *Political Economy Research Institute*, 2024. <https://grconnect.com/tox100/ry2021/index.php?advbasic=bas&chemfac=chemfac&company1=314&search=yes&sortp=poor&>

⁷ "New Report, Interactive Map Show Widespread Inequality in Chemical Facility Dangers." *The Center for Effective Government*, 16 Jan. 2016. <https://www.foreffectivegov.org/shadow-of-danger-release.html?>