

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 22, 2019

Ms. Liesl Eichler Clark  
Director  
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
525 West Allegan Street  
P.O. Box 30473  
Lansing, MI 48909-7973

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler  
Acting Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20460

Dear Director Clark and Acting Administrator Wheeler:

We send this letter to express our joint concerns regarding the recent emergency response to Marathon Petroleum in Detroit on February 3, 2019, after strong odors were reported from multiple locations across Southwest Detroit, Dearborn, and the Downriver communities. It is our collective responsibility to ensure public health and safety is protected at all times—this deserves serious attention.

It is our understanding, the Dearborn Fire Department responded and investigated three locations for a strong odor or possible gas leak. While none of the locations were found to have hazardous levels of chemicals in the air by the Department, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) “traced the odors to the coke-flare system at the Marathon Petroleum refinery,” in a press release. The incident has raised serious concerns across both our communities. Many concerned citizens, families, and local officials are asking questions and seeking reassurances that everything is safe.

It is critical the public has a full understanding of what happened and the exact steps each of your agencies will be taking to keep the public safe and informed moving forward. To this end, we respectfully seek answers to the following questions and ask you to provide a clear and understandable plan for the public, with regard to this incident:

1. What immediate steps were taken to address these odor reports? Please provide the exact timeline for responding to this incident and the process for identifying the source. How quickly were the source or sources in this case identified and communicated to emergency officials and the public?
2. Has MDEQ and EPA been able to independently identify the specific chemical compounds of the odor and the levels that were present in the air at the time?
3. Were any specific National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) violated for any criteria air pollutant? What were the specific NAAQS readings for all the available sensors monitoring Marathon Petroleum? Will any new sensors or monitoring processes be implemented to improve safety and monitoring?

4. How is Marathon Petroleum's coke-flare system monitored by MDEQ and EPA? And how often is it monitored? Please provide an accounting of all monitoring devices used and what entity is responsible for managing each device and the data collected.
5. It is our understanding the refinery would be shutting down temporary. What is the current status of the coke-flare system? When was it taken offline and when will it be brought back online? What criteria will be evaluated to determine when to bring it back online, and who will make that final decision?
6. Is MDEQ and/or EPA working with Marathon Petroleum on its plan for developing "short-term options to neutralize" the odor?
7. What specific actions are MDEQ and EPA taking to prevent future incidents of this kind from happening in the future? Please clarify each of your agencies plans to monitor the health and safety of this site.
8. What additional actions are EPA and MDEQ taking to ensure that any potential harmful air pollutants do not affect families who live in surrounding communities?
9. How is MDEQ and EPA working together between agencies and with stakeholders to keep everyone updated?
10. Has MDEQ and/or EPA required Marathon Petroleum to take any specific actions in this incident or improve any of its refining operations or safety procedures?

The residents of Southwest Detroit, Dearborn, and Downriver hold us all responsible for protecting these Michigan communities. Thank you in advance for your attention and work on this important matter. We look forward to a full and prompt response.

Sincerely,



DEBBIE DINGELL  
Member of Congress



RASHIDA TLAIB  
Member of Congress

cc:

Gary R. Heminger, Chairman and CEO, Marathon Oil Refinery