

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

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Michael S. Regan  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of the Administrator, 1101A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

We write to you in support of the adoption of a proposal submitted by the Torrance Refinery Action Alliance (TRAA) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding changes to the agency's Risk Management Program (RMP) regulations and related goals. These proposed changes to RMP rules are aimed at strengthening these rules to better protect the American people against chemical plant explosions that could harm people residing near refineries.

As members of Congress serving communities near major oil refineries, we have direct experience with concerns regarding the safety of the refining process near densely populated communities. Two refineries in the region, located in the communities of Torrance and Wilmington, still use hydrofluoric acid (HF) and modified hydrofluoric acid (MHF) in the refining process. As reported by the Torrance Fire Department, the Torrance Refinery, which uses MHF alkylation process, has experienced more than 20 MHF-related incidents since 2010. MHF, if accidentally leaked, will release a ground-hugging fog that could travel several miles in concentrations sufficient to cause death or irreparable injury to those in its path.

For years, our constituents have voiced strong concerns about the volatility and deadliness of HF and MHF, and they are alarmed that an accidental release of these chemicals could lead to a catastrophe in the surrounding residential and business areas. MHF alkylation poses a grave public health risk to our constituents, and it is time to end its use. Already, many refineries use safer alternatives in the petroleum refining process while limiting the risks of chemical explosions to nearby communities.

In January 2017, the EPA issued a rule meant to create protections for plant workers and surrounding communities by preventing chemical releases and explosions that could harm thousands. This rule was a strong start, and the EPA can build upon this reform with stronger measures to stop the use of dangerous chemicals in the refining process.

We believe the EPA should go further and strengthen RMP rules by phasing out the use of HF and MHF in the alkylation process, in order to improve safety at and near petroleum refineries around the nation. The experience of residents living near the Torrance and Wilmington

refineries, who have fought for safer measures to protect the region illustrate the need to make these changes.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress