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August 24, 2017

Honorable Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

I would like to commend officials at EPA Region 5 for their response to protect human health and safety by initiating a time-critical removal action in my congressional district. The EPA's approval of \$1.6 million to respond to the uncontrolled and unsecured hazardous waste found at Plating, Inc. (888 N. Prior Ave., St. Paul, MN) is essential to ensuring local neighbors, some living only 15 feet from this industrial facility, are protected from extremely toxic and dangerous chemicals.

Local elected leaders, emergency management officials, and my office have met with the EPA's "On Scene Coordinator" and we are pleased with the level of cooperation, communication, and the proposed response action plan. In addition, the leadership at Region 5 has been extraordinarily responsive and for this, I am appreciative.

Administrator Pruitt, in light of this completely preventable endangerment of the community, I am formally requesting the EPA, in concert with the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Minnesota, pursue all applicable federal criminal charges against the owner(s) of Plating, Inc., and all responsible individuals. The person(s) responsible for threatening the health and safety of my constituents, along with shifting the financial burden onto taxpayers for the clean-up of this toxic mess, must be held accountable.

The decision by the owner of Plating, Inc. to abandon 82 open vats and 76 drums of toxic chemicals is an environmental crime that must be prosecuted. The fact that individuals walked away from vats and drums containing sodium hydroxide, chromic acid, sodium cyanide, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, chromium, and zinc without informing regulators or public safety officials is an act of negligence and public endangerment. To highlight the gravity of risk to local residents, according to the EPA Region 5's memorandum of July 20, 2017, "A fire at the facility, mixed with water, could release a toxic or caustic cloud to the neighborhood including hydrogen cyanide gas."

A business owner's ability to utilize highly toxic, volatile, and potentially dangerous chemicals requires compliance with federal and state laws ensuring that safeguards to protect human health and safety will be respected and met. This is clearly not the case with regard to Plating, Inc. Therefore, there is no better example of the need for strict, effective, and uncompromising environmental enforcement by the EPA and the Department of Justice than pursuing federal criminal charges against the owner of Plating, Inc.

On behalf of the neighbors and taxpayers negatively impacted by this environmental crime, I appreciate the EPA's on-going efforts and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

cc: Robert A. Kaplan, EPA Acting Regional Administrator, Region 5
Gregory C. Brooker, Acting U.S. Attorney - District of Minnesota