



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
28TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

October 26, 2009

Ms. Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street SW
Washington, DC 20460-0001

Dear Ms. Jackson,

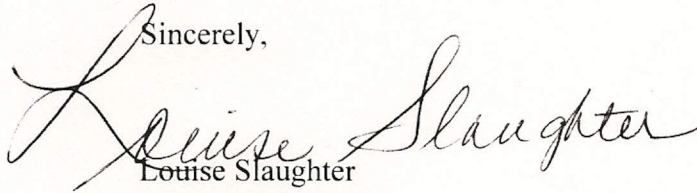
As you know the federally funded Tonawanda air quality study released earlier this year by the Department of Environment Conservation (DEC) found significantly high concentrations of benzene in the air in and around the Town of Tonawanda that greatly exceed the state average. Specifically, the study found that regional benzene levels are seventy five times greater than New York State guidelines and that Tonawanda Coke is a predominant source of this benzene.

In light of these concerns, your agency conducted a full no-notice compliance inspection and evaluation of Tonawanda Coke in April, 2009. I commend the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for proactively initiating this inspection to ensure Tonawanda Coke is operating safely and conforming to federal regulations. However to date, the findings of this inspection and evaluation have not been released, and a timeline for the release of this information has not been shared. While I appreciate the need to be judicious and careful in your collection and analysis of data and information, and commend you for your efforts, I know that you equally understand and share my concern that this be accomplished in a timely manner.

Therefore, I request that you expeditiously complete the analysis of the data collected in April and provide guidance as to when the EPA's findings will be finalized and released to the public. Each day that passes, the citizens of Tonawanda and its nearby neighborhoods continue to be exposed to hazardous chemicals like benzene. Moreover, a timely release of the EPA's findings will assist New York State to take swifter action on the state level. For example, the EPA results could be useful to the DEC in developing a benzene reduction plan or other measures to control Tonawanda Coke's benzene emissions.

I appreciate the EPA's continued focus to address the air quality situation in Tonawanda and thank you for your consideration of my request. Please contact Zena Shuber Dorsey, in my District Office at 716-853-5813 to help address any questions or be of any assistance with this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

cc: Ms. Erin Heaney, Clean Air Coalition of WNY

Commissioner Pete Grannis, NY DEC

LMS: