

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 21, 2016

Administrator Gina McCarthy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

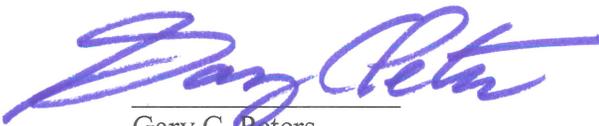
We write to express great concern about the State of Michigan's failure to submit an Implementation Plan to address sulfur dioxide emissions in Wayne County, MI. Given the threats to public health from continued noncompliance with national air quality standards, it is critical that EPA require an effective Implementation Plan as soon as possible—the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) plan is already well past due. If MDEQ fails to finalize an effective Implementation Plan over the next 60 days, we would urge the EPA to pursue a Federal Implementation Plan. A strong sense of urgency is needed to reduce sulfur dioxide levels and other air pollution in Wayne County in order to improve the health of Michigan residents.

As you know, in July 2013 a portion of Wayne County was designated as having sulfur dioxide levels above National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The state was required to submit their plan to the EPA by April 2015. MDEQ released a draft Implementation Plan in August 2015, but the plan did little to demonstrate how this non-attainment area would meet national air quality standards. On March 10, 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a finding of Michigan's failure to submit an Implementation Plan. Residents of Wayne County simply cannot afford to wait for the process to drag on any longer.

Detroit and Wayne County residents are at risk of exposure to high levels of sulfur dioxide, which is well documented to cause significant respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Asthmatics are particularly sensitive to exposure to high levels of sulfur dioxide. The rate of asthma hospitalization for Detroit residents is three times higher than that of Michigan as a whole. This burden is disproportionately placed on children. In Detroit, asthma is the largest single cause of student absenteeism.

The EPA should ensure that a strong and effective Implementation Plan to meet national air quality standards in Wayne County is in place as soon as possible. In light of continued delays, as well as a lack of action in responding to the Flint water emergency, we are concerned that the MDEQ is not fully committed to this process. If the EPA finds that the State and private stakeholders are unable to work expeditiously enough to develop an effective plan by the end of spring, we urge you to move forward with a Federal Implementation Plan that protects the health and well-being of the people of Wayne County.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United State Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator