

**PUBLIC MEETING  
STERI-TECH, Salinas  
Date: August 30, 2022  
Time: 5:30pm - 8:30pm**

*Record opens at 5:30pm*

**Carmen Guerrero**

Hello! Good afternoon to all. To let them know that we are going to be getting started in a few minutes. I know we had said we were going to start at 5:30. We want to broadcast this, to allow people who cannot reach, through Facebook Live. The representation of the municipality is about to enter, so we are going to give you a few minutes in what they mount quickly and start immediately with the meeting. Thank you all so much for being here.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Well, good afternoon again to all. Thank you for being here today. My name is Carmen Guerrero Perez. I am the director of the Caribbean Division of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. I will be facilitating today's meeting in collaboration with my various colleagues at the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. First, we want to thank you for taking your time this afternoon to participate in this public meeting on the topic of ethylene oxide emissions being emitted from the Steri-Tech facility in Salinas, the long-term public health risks these emissions pose, and the various actions we are taking to identify solutions to these emissions and reduce emissions as quickly as possible. Before we start the meeting, I want to let you know how the agenda of the meeting will be carried out and introduce you to some key people who will be addressing you. First, we are going to have a few words of welcome from EPA's Regional Administrator in Region 2 of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, Lisa García. After Assistant Deputy Administrator of the EPA Headquarters Air Office, Tomás Carbonell. He comes straight from Washington DC. A few words from the Mayor of Salinas, Honorable Karilyn Bonilla, and at the same time Wanda Ríos, community leader and whom we thank for having provided us with the community center. We are also grateful for the meetings we had before this community meeting, where we were able to establish a dialogue with various

representatives of the communities. We also thank the mayor for all the support in terms of equipment and materials to make this meeting possible, and the coordination of taking the message to the residents of the municipality of Salinas so that they knew about the activity and could be informed as part of it. After these welcoming words, we will have a presentation from the EPA technical team and I will introduce them, José Font, and Alex Rivera. Our technical team is also accompanied by colleagues from various offices from EPA Region 2, including the Air Division. We have Air Division Director Rick Ruvo. At the same time, the Air Division is represented by Ysabel Banon. Ysabel, if you may. At the same time, we have other representatives from the Caribbean Division, Brenda, who is in the background, and Jackie, who will be helping us in the Q&A session and, also, Gloria Díaz, who will also be helping us as part of the presentations. We want to acknowledge that we have the participation of several central government agencies and representatives of the Salinas City Legislature. From the Department of Natural Resources, we have Amarillys Ortiz, we have Leimarys Delgado and, also, Lucía Fernández. So, these colleagues are here as well, if you have any questions for the Department of Natural Resources. We know that from the Department of Health, Dr. Mayra Toro was going to try to get to the meeting. I have not seen her as yet, but soon you may see her and if there are questions for her, please let us know. And we also have the president and the various members of the City Legislature who are here with us. After the presentations of the EPA technical team, we will move on to what is going to be the Q&A session and we wanted to let you know before we entered that session, some background information about it. We want to ensure that all of you are heard and that you can participate in this meeting, so we ask you to be interested in speaking - you saw at the entrance that there was the attendance list - there if anyone wants to talk, you can put a checkmark, so then we can call you on a first come-first served basis. But at the same time, if you did not state your interest in participating there, you are more than welcome. We are going to have several microphones that are going to be available to all of you, so everyone can talk. We want to get all the information you want to share with us, including your comments. We will be here as long as it will take to be able to listen to you. At the same time if you prefer to write your questions -- some people have told us that they do not like to speak on the microphone in front of people -- let them know that we have some cards, they have them there, they can see Ysabel who has them, some index cards. So, then you can write your question, give it to Ysabel, to Brenda, to Gloria, to our EPA team that is here with us Jackie is also back there. Feel free, if you have questions, we will read them. We have pens so that we can then share each of those

questions. It is very important, if you were not able to sign-in upon arrival, please sign in now. That is how we keep you updated on all this information. This is the first of several meetings we will continue to have with you over the course of the next few months to keep you up to date on the work we are doing on this issue. So, particularly, we want to have your email addresses, phone numbers and the best ways to reach you so we can give that information to you. At the same time, it is important to highlight that this meeting only begins this process of continuous communication and coordination between all of you and the EPA. If there are people who cannot participate in today's meeting, please let them know that we are willing to coordinate future meetings at other times that are convenient for you. We are now in the community of La Margarita. We can go to other areas in the municipality of Salinas to be able to answer the questions that other communities and other areas in the municipality may have. After the meeting, when we finish the Q&A session, we are also available to address all your questions and concerns, and later that you may request as well. There are some logistical elements, and I am wrapping up so that we can officially start the meeting. We have a translation team here, which we are grateful to have here because some of our attendants speak English only. The interpreters will be available for simultaneous translation. Here to my left, you see that we have the team that is doing the whole transcription process. We want you to know that the audio of this meeting is being recorded and then the audience will be provided with transcript of what was discussed at this meeting. When you go to ask questions, it is very important for us that you please say your name, community, area, or entity that you represent, because that helps us in the transcription process. As I said at the beginning, this meeting is being broadcast on Facebook Live again to their families, friends, representatives of other interested parties that are not present here. Let them know that this is also being recorded on Facebook Live and is being broadcast live through the community page and is already being transmitted also through the Facebook link of the municipality of Salinas. For your information, restrooms, bathrooms are located at the entrance on the right. Concerning emergency exits, because we all must be prepared, we have doors on my right and on my left. At the same time there is the back door so that we can all be prepared in any emergency, and specifically we are all taking all the prevention measures for COVID, so we thank you. We take that into consideration as part of the meeting. So, without further ado, I want to introduce you to EPA Regional Administrator Lisa García for a few words of welcome. Lisa.

**Lisa García:**

Hello. Good afternoon. Can you hear me? Thank you. I am Lisa García. And welcome. And thank you so much for coming out this evening. I also want to thank Mayor Bonilla and Salinas and all of you. And, also, Carmen, José, Alex, Gloria, the EPA team for planning this public meeting. Well, I want to welcome all of you this evening. Thank you for taking the time to be here with us and learn more about this very important topic. I had the privilege of being in Guayama and Salinas last month during Administrator Michael Reagan's visit, entitled "Journey to Justice in Puerto Rico." And I also met with some of you in June, when we had a meeting in Aguirre. It is very important for the EPA to hear directly from you about your environmental challenges and priorities. Addressing the risks from airborne toxics is a priority for this agency and this administration, under the leadership of President Biden and Administrator Reagan. The EPA is committed to protecting public health from toxic air releases from industrial facilities, especially in communities that have suffered from air pollution and other environmental burdens. What we call environmental justice, that there is a priority in environmental justice. We are improving our data on air pollution emissions, communicating the risks to the public -- as well as in meetings with you -- creating regulatory solutions, and delivering pollution reductions for local communities, like here in Salinas and Guayama. We are here today to talk to the community and hear, and listen to the community about air pollution caused by the chemical called ethylene oxide. This chemical is used in a type of facility known as Steri-Tech. There are about 100 similar commercial companies across the country, and some of them are releasing ethylene oxide into outdoor air at a level that is very concerning. So, this includes Steri-Tech, and we want to talk to you about what we know and the situation and how we are going to reduce pollution. This is just the beginning, as Carmen said, the beginning of the conversation and dialogue to talk about this, this topic. The EPA is sharing this information now so that people have access to the same information we have at the EPA, and can make informed decisions about risks and their health. We, at the EPA, are committed to keeping you informed during these times, throughout the risk reduction process and continuing to protect public health, around the world. So, let us look at the presentation. But first I wanted to introduce someone. I am very honored to introduce Tomás Carbonell, who is the Deputy Administrator of the EPA Air Office in Washington, D.C. and who has been leading the Biden administration's efforts to reduce the risk of ethylene oxide. Thank you.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

Thank you. Thank you, Lisa. Good afternoon and welcome to all. It is a privilege for me to be with you here in Salinas and I thank you all for taking the time to meet with us. My name is Tomás Carbonell. I joined the EPA in January 2021 and I help lead the Agency's work to combat climate change, reduce air pollution, and protect air quality. Prior to joining the EPA, I worked as an attorney in an environmental organization for over eight years. Also, with the focus on clean air and climate change. I have dedicated my professional career to ensuring clean air and protecting public health, and I understand how important the issues we are talking about today are to all of you. Before my regional colleagues go into the details, I would first like to tell you, from my perspective, the three main messages of today's meeting.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**Tomás Carbonell:**

First, the risk in Salinas is too high and the EPA is concerned about this risk. Second, we are committed to protecting health in communities facing the risk of ethylene oxide and are taking this issue seriously. Today I pledge with you that we will continue to work on this until risk levels are reduced. This includes using the tools we have at the EPA, such as establishing new regulations and working collaboratively with local governments, facilities, communities, and anyone else who can work with us to help reduce risk. Third, you deserve to be part of this process and it is important that your voices be heard, your concerns shared and your needs met. We will share more information about this later, but you can also find more details about everything we will be talking about this evening, including how to make your voice heard on the EPA website, using the link shown on the current slide.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**Tomás Carbonell:**

Thank you all so much for being here today. And now I am going to go to Carmen again. Thank you.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, Tomás. Now we would like to invite the mayor of the municipality of Salinas.

**Karilyn Bonilla:**

Good afternoon and thank you very much to all the residents of La Margarita Development for having us in your community. A community I also feel a part of. I see residents and leaders, from the Playita community, from Residencial Brisas del Mar, municipal leaders representing various communities throughout our town, and that is important so that they can get first-hand information. Certainly, when the public announcement of the risk to surrounding communities about ethylene oxide released by Steri-Tech was made, it caused great concern, not only for the surrounding residents, but also for the municipal administration of Salinas. That is why I want to thank the entire EPA staff, first for the openness they have had with the municipal administration, the previous meetings that have already been held so that we can have first-hand information. I believe that the key here is going to be transparency, and that we as a community are part of the search for a permanent solution to this problem. Likewise, I want to thank Steri-Tech for being here. I think it is important that you can hear first-hand the concerns that residents have and that you can, as we hope, work as a team with the EPA, you as a company, in order to look for permanent alternatives. I believe that the most important thing here is the health of the people of Salinas. And I believe that if we have a firm commitment to find a solution to avoid pollution, I think that we will achieve great results. At least on our part, the communications I have had with the director of the EPA, expressed not only that it is important that permanent action is taken to avoid pollution, but on the other hand, that in the face of immediate actions a monitoring system can be established, that the regulations can be amended promptly, to make sure we have all the tools. So, thank you all so much for being here. It is the best time to be able to clarify all doubts, to be able to submit proposals that we have to make both to the federal agency and also to all those involved. I believe that this is the first step. There will be other meetings that are going to be of benefit so that we can channel this as soon as possible, because we know that it is

an emergency situation, that we must address for the people of Salinas. So, thank you all so much for being here.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

We want to invite Wanda Ríos to say a few words of welcome as well. Thank you, Mayor.

**Wanda Ríos:**

Well, first, I want to greet you on behalf of La Margarita Association. I am Wanda Ríos, president of La Margarita Association and here we have a couple of our members from the community, and I want to tell you the following. Kind greetings from La Margarita community and from the Association of Residents of La Margarita, welcome. The organization and resident association were created in the 70s and 80s. This is very quick. We include 314 houses, so you know where we are. Our story began in the 70s, when our parents, full of enthusiasm and happiness, purchased their homes with great effort through Farmer Home. But that joy ended very soon when we suffered the first floods, where the water level reached up to seven feet inside some homes in this development. That is where our ordeal began. How was it possible that the federal government sold us houses within the riverbed? We wondered. To this day we have suffered five major floods with the most recent being during Hurricane Maria, where we had floods that, not only included sea water, but also river water. Then, in 2014 we found out about the installation of a telecommunications tower in the floodway of the Nigua River, riverbed, where the river enters our development. Which would be detrimental to our health and the devaluation of our houses already impacted by recurrent floods. We appealed to all government agencies demanding that they comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the law that is the great charter of the environmental rules and laws of the United States and Puerto Rico. The law that created the agencies, their offices of the EPA, to ensure that there was a harmony between the environment and human beings. We pleaded for environmental justice to be done with our already damaged community, especially because of the effects of government agencies inaction, which granted permits without the community being part of the process, nor notified. We even received a letter from Mrs. Lisa García. I do not know if you remember, in April, that on behalf of the president of the United States, she wrote to us about the FCC and NEPA procedure. We already knew that procedure. What we were telling the president of the United States was that it is not fulfilled here in Puerto Rico, but we thank him for his response. Then, in 2021,

we learned about a risk and danger modeling developed by them, on that basis La Margarita had a danger score of 226, when Salinas had an average of 78 and Puerto Rico an average of 84. Our danger was due to the flooding coming from the sea and the river. Now we have the new risk, ethylene oxide, which although it was identified in 2016, only now, six years later, we have learned of its new classification. We welcome them again, because we would have never thought that the EPA leadership, the one we have been after for six years, was here in our community and I appreciate their being here. And I just wanted to let you know everything we have been through, that not only is it a new event, which maybe it would be in other communities, but that we have already had a thousand problems here, especially the Air Department, that the Air Department has to do with radiation and the emissions that we have and suffer. Not only now, that we have the EtO, but we have electricity, which is another problem and we have the AS; pollutants get to us here daily. I welcome you. I hope that this is a new beginning for good communication, and that we can work together for the well-being of this community. Thanks a lot.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, Wanda, for your words and message. I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know that Dr. Mayra Toro, who represents the Puerto Rico Department of Health, also joined the meeting, and we recognize her attendance. Thank you, Mayra, for being here. Also, I should have mentioned it previously, we have Steri-Tech representatives here at the meeting: Andrés Vivoni, Jorge Vivoni, and Rosemarie González who are here with us. So, thank you for being here too. Well, then now let us start with the technical presentations with José Font, who is the Deputy Director of the Caribbean Division of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency.

**José Font:**

Thank you very much, Carmen. It is truly a privilege for me to be here today and to be able to address you. It is very important that everything I say here today you understand. If you have questions, at the end I will be pleased to answer them. We do not leave until we answer all the questions and that is what it is all about. Thank you, Wanda. Very well said, very eloquent. Summarizing what we are here today for. I am going to mention some broad topics and then we will go a little deeper into it. First, ethylene oxide. Second, Steri-



Tech. Risk Study. Risk it may present to the community. New regulations. Record that, new regulation. And what we are doing to reduce these emissions. Products that are used and are necessary in our society to be able to sterilize. "Devices" or dental and medical instruments or equipment. That is what we are going to be talking about here today. And what are we doing to ensure the public health of each one of you. So, with that we start with the presentation, if you help me.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

I am going to go as slow as possible. There are some colleagues from the EPA who are translating everything we are saying here. That is vital, because that means that at the end of the presentations, they can help us respond to all your concerns, which is what we came here for. That is what we are here for, to answer each and every question. Starting here with the presentation, ethylene oxide. A colorless, flammable, odorless gas. Well, necessary in society.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

It exists. What are its uses? To sterilize medical and dental products. To make other products. It is an ingredient. All of us use medical and dental products. Many times, they are necessary and can change our lives. True? Important. Next

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

To put this in a national context, there are approximately 100 commercial sterilizers in the United States. Not only in Puerto Rico, there are several here, but there are 100 in the United States, approximately. According to a risk analysis by the EPA, Steri-Tech, which is located nearby here, is one of 23 facilities found to have an unacceptable long-term public health risk. Risk is measured in two ways: short-term and long-term. Short term is immediate. If I find that there are emissions that can have immediate effects on public health, I must act. That is in the short term. Here we are talking about the long term. Long term is 70 years.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

Ethylene oxide is considerably more potent than previously thought in inducing public health risks. What does this mean? My friends, science changes every day and new methodologies, new methods, are found that give us more information. And what happened with ethylene oxide? With the passage of time science evolves and we realize that it is much more toxic than we thought it was. And then we do risk studies. We found that in the long term, 70 years, and I am going to explain the 70-year lifespan, there is a potential that if you are exposed to those high concentrations of ethylene oxide, you could develop cancer.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

The type of cancer associated with ethylene oxide is breast cancer, lymphatic cancer, and possibly leukemia. The types of cancer that could impact people are very specific.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

Let me stop a bit before I get into that next slide, and explain a little more about the 70 years. It is common practice in the scientific world that we use 70 years. 70 years means that if you are exposed to a given concentration during 70 years, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, you could, you could develop, or there could be the potential for you to develop cancer. That is what this means. It is very important to understand that. We are talking about the long term, 70 years, seven days, 24 hours a day exposed to that concentration. These studies are extremely conservative. Because science also provides us with information we know the toxicity of ethylene oxide, anyway, there is a lot of uncertainty in aspects of this science. And for us to ensure that we protect public health, we are extremely conservative when we do risk calculations and that is what we are presenting here today. In the case that brings us here this afternoon, ethylene oxide has no problem being released into water or soil. That is not the situation we have here. It has no acute or urgent short-term health impacts. The use that consumers make of products made with EtO or sterilized with EtO, has no problem either. It is their emissions into the air. Emissions into the air we can breathe. Breathing it, and if we breathe it for 70 years, 24/7 we could have the potential to develop cancer.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

Special risk considerations. Workers could be exposed to higher levels, because they are there, because they are in direct contact. There is another sister federal agency known as OSHA, which many of you know, that sets standards to protect occupational health. We work with them, as part of the federal government, to achieve in an overlapping, united way, new regulations established to protect both workers and citizens. And what do we achieve with that? Protecting public health that our reason to be. Children and infants

may be at increased risk. When we talk about 70 years, who is more likely to be exposed for 70 years? The child. If that happens at my age, well, I think I have lived longer than I have left to live, but we will see, maybe science helps me. So, an important fact about children is that they are developing, developing cells, they are more vulnerable, they are more susceptible, developing, smaller, that is why they breathe more, inhale more compared to their size. It means that they may be exposed in a different way than the adult. Therefore, we must be conservative when we talk about risk and when it is calculated, because there are these variations between children and adults and we must protect them all. Therefore, we must be conservative. And it is very important, and I must emphasize it. 70 years, seven days, 24 hours a day, to a concentration, all equally. This risk assessment and the rule it supports focuses on community risk, not worker risk. We are talking about community. In this case La Margarita, adjacent communities, near the Steri-Tech facility. Moving on.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

It is always highly recommended that if you have any symptoms or have any medical condition or concern, what do we ordinarily do? We consult with the doctor. And in that doctor's visit, here we show existing literature that was developed by the Centers for Disease Control, our sister agency that helps us with health issues, which has developed these guidelines that help doctors treat, watch over and address ethylene oxide concerns.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

Details about risk analysis, EtO uses, facility processes and facility equipment, community, and climate details. All these elements are used to analyze and a map is established. Where do these data come from? The data comes from a collection that the

agency made when it learned of the potent toxicity of ethylene oxide and developed these strategies to collect information from the facilities. Many of you will say, "Well, but the facility is providing you with the data." Well, the agency has the authority to request the data, that implies sanctions if they provide us with false information or information that is not accurate or representative of the conditions there. It is as simple as that. We collect the data. Data provided by the same 100 sterilizers, approximately, throughout the United States. These models are analyzed and carried out. Modeling is done to get an idea of the largest number of the population. If I have direct data in various parts then I cannot necessarily extrapolate the entire area that could be impacted to the concentration that worries me.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #13 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

Here we can see what the dispersion is like. The colors are not reflected very well here, but let us talk about risk here. Where does the agency draw the line for ethylene oxide effects? When we understand that we have the possibility of 100 cases of cancer occurring in 1 million or in smaller numbers, 1 in 10,000 people. When we are doing the risk study and we find that there is that possibility or that potential of 100 in 1 million or 1 in 10,000, I worry, I must do something. We must take action if they are higher. So, what do we have here? In the case that brings us here today, we have the possibility or potential of 6,000 in 1 million. 6 out of 1,000. That is how the Federal Environmental Protection Agency handles risk. They state what amount of risk I can accept given the toxicity of the compound. I do the analysis, I collect the data, I do the computations and if the risk exceeds these thresholds, I have a situation to worry about in the long term. There is no short-term matter here. Here everything is long-term. People here near the source are exposed to higher concentrations. This outline shows 100 in 1 million. This small one here is the outline of 6000 in 1 million. Alex, that is correct, right?

**Alex Rivera:**

Not necessarily. It decreases as it goes out.

**José Font:**

That is the dispersion that happens. But if you look, the point I am trying to make is that we can capture a larger population, a larger area. And this is the big difference of modeling versus precise sampling locations.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**José Font:**

How can we reduce the risk to acceptable levels? We need to reduce the use of ethylene oxide or reduce its emissions. It is not persistent in the environment. If we contain it, the risk goes down. If I control emissions, the risk goes down. It is important to work with all these sterilizers to implement measures that allow us to reduce the risk to levels that are acceptable to the agency.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #15 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

Now I am going to stop here and introduce my colleague Alex Rivera, who is going to talk specifically about Steri-Tech and what is going on there. Alex.

**Alex Rivera:**

Thank you all so much for being here. As Jose just introduced me, my name is Alex Rivera. I work as an inspector in the air quality program of the EPA office in Puerto Rico. I do not have the eloquence of my colleague José, but I will try to be eloquent and provide a clear message and clear information that is useful to you. I wanted to start, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the area and with the facility, where Steri-Tech is located. It is found nearby here where we are gathered right now, at the Highway 701 and 180 intersection.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #16 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

First, I would like to give you basic information about what Steri-Tech does. Steri-Tech is a Puerto Rican company that began operations in 1986. Its business is sterilizing products of the medical device manufacturing industry here on the island. Currently 100% of the products that are handled are sterilized using ethylene oxide. The facility operates 24/7. I will be describing the sterilization process later. It is important that you understand that it is a process that operates in batches and we are not necessarily talking about the facility emitting ethylene oxide continuously, 24 hours, 7 days a week, and I will explain that later. The facility also consumes an average of 40 tons a year of ethylene oxide. It employs around 44 people. It is regulated by OSHA. Also, the sterilization process is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, the FDA. It is regulated by the EPA. Specifically, as established in 40 CFR, Part 63, Subpart O. It is the one that establishes the standards related to sterilization facilities that handle ethylene oxide. They are also subject to compliance with an air emission source operating permit, which is issued by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources and establishes all the conditions and requirements that the facility must meet to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act and Regulations for the Control of Air Pollution in Puerto Rico.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**Alex Rivera:**

The sterilization process. This is a basic description of how the sterilization process is carried out and the steps involved in order to be able to sterilize, in this case, medical devices. The first step of the process is the conditioning process. In this process the temperature and humidity in a room are adjusted according to the sterilization procedure for the product. And the sterilization procedure for the product is a term that I will be using quite often and it is specifically regulated by the FDA. Depending on the type of product it will be the sterilization specifications of that product, the amount of EtO to which it will

be exposed, the amount of time it must be left in an aeration room so that the EtO can be released and can be treated. The same in the case of the aeration process and in the case of how long the product must be for the residual EtO to be released. Next is the sterilization process, which is carried out in a sterilization chamber that I will be describing later, consisting of five phases. Once the product is inside the sterilization chamber, it is conditioned. Temperature and humidity adjustments are also carried out according to the sterilization procedure. The gas determined for that product is then injected. A specific amount of gas is exposed and after that exposure process is completed, the evacuation process begins, in which the gas is removed from the chamber and transferred to a control equipment where the gas is destroyed. After that, a series of air washes are carried out inside the chamber to ensure that the chamber is free of gas and that it is safe to open it and then begin the aeration process. In the aeration process the product is removed from the chamber and transferred to another aeration room, as it is known. Here, the product also remains for a time set according to the corresponding sterilization procedure, which guarantees that whatever EtO trapped inside the packaging is treated, in this case in a control equipment. After the aeration process is completed, it is transferred to a storage area where the customer collects the already sterilized product.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**Alex Rivera:**

The sterilization process at Steri-Tech is not very different from the one I have just described. They also have pre-conditioning rooms in case the medical device being handled requires it. They have four sterilization chambers and four aeration rooms. The slide I am adding is intended to show you where these activities that I have been describing to you occur. As you can see, the area where the aeration rooms are is here. The sterilization chambers are further south of the facility and in the southeast area of the facility is the control device. Currently the facility has a thermal oxidizer. Both the EtO that is generated in the sterilization chambers, and that generated in the aeration rooms, is treated with that thermal oxidizer.



**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #19 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

This diagram, this flowchart, although it turns out to be quite simple, shows you the flow of the product that I have been talking about. The gas flow, as you can see, once the gas enters the sterilization chambers, in the process of evacuation and gas washing, is sent to the thermal oxidizer. The same happens in the aeration rooms. All the gas that is evacuated in both processes is treated in the thermal oxidizer. In yellow we show emissions that are considered uncontrolled or also known as fugitive emissions. They can be generated while opening and closing the doors of the sterilization chambers. Also, another source of uncontrolled, fugitive emissions could be the residual EtO that could remain in the packaging. These emissions are extremely important in the discussion we are having, because they are uncontrolled emissions, as I told you, that we would like to be able to take to a control equipment using available technologies.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**Alex Rivera:**

Here I show you -/ I have been talking about sterilization chambers three times. These are examples of what a sterilization chamber typically looks like. As you can see, it is quite a sophisticated piece of equipment. As I mentioned, several phases occur within it: gas is injected, gas is evacuated, humidity and temperature are under control.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

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**Alex Rivera:**

The facility, as I mentioned, has four chambers and four ventilation rooms. In the photos, in the slide, two of the chambers are shown. In this case there are three sterilization

chambers, at Steri-Tech. As I indicated, they have four. Four sterilization chambers and four aeration rooms.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #22 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

These are examples of control devices that are commonly used to manage EtO in sterilization industries. The first example is the wet gas scrubber, where the gas passes through a column with a gasket. As the word implies, the destruction or reaction of the gas occurs by means of a liquid solution, where the gas is then converted to a liquid solution and the gas continues to travel towards the top of the column and then the resulting gas is already clean. In the other example, it is a dry gas scrubber. The same effect occurs, but without the liquid solution. In this case it passes through a reagent that promotes an interaction also of the gas with that reagent and has a filter medium to retain and filter the air that passes through it.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #23 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

This slide is one that perhaps, if you go through the area, you are very familiar with. It shows the control equipment that the Steri-Tech facility is about to use. It is a recuperative catalytic oxidizer. It is a process just like the thermal oxidizer - I forgot to give you some details about the thermal oxidizer. The thermal oxidizer destroys the EtO under high temperatures, it oxidizes the gas. In this case it is a combination of thermal processes with a catalytic medium, which also promotes the most effective removal of the gas by reactions that occur in contact with the catalytic medium.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #24 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

What kind of work we are doing? What is in process? The agency is working with the Steri-Tech facility in order to resolve alleged compliance issues that have been found, and we are focused on reducing EtO emissions at the facility. As our colleague José mentioned, the key to reducing the risk we are talking about is to reduce those emissions. Also recently, the Department of Natural Resources issued a permit to the facility that begins the process necessary to be able to start using the control device, the recuperative catalytic oxidizer I just mentioned. Some other actions must happen. For example, this is equipment that, as has happened in other facilities, tests must be carried out in order to demonstrate that it is effective in reducing gas and complying with the efficiency percentages established by the regulations, which I will be discussing later.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #25 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

The regulation I mentioned that EPA uses to regulate these facilities is 40 CFR Part 63 Subpart O. This type of facility is required to reduce EtO emissions from sterilization chambers by at least 99%. It also requires that at least 99% be reduced, or a threshold, based on 1 ppm concentration of emissions from aeration rooms. However, uncontrolled emissions which I included in the diagram, that type of emission currently does not have a control requirement. In that case, the agency is in the process of proposing a new regulation that establishes more restrictive limits and adds requirements related to these controlled emissions that are key to reducing the risk and emissions of the facilities. However, it is also important to note that compliance with current regulations does not guarantee acceptable risk. So, I would like to be able to give you a series of examples, because if there are examples of facilities that without having amended regulations and additional restrictions, if you have managed to establish measures to effectively reduce your emissions and risk.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #26 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

The first example I would like to give you is one that is being worked on here in Añasco, Puerto Rico, the Edwards Lifesciences facility. The facility has been working on voluntary improvements. It was started in October last year and is about to start using it. They are expected to be in operation as early as November. It consists of increasing the efficiency of removing EtO from 99 to 99.99% after installation, as a result of installing new EtO control equipment. It is also intended to control the emissions that are being generated in their warehouse. In the case of Medline Industries, which is in Illinois, the facility agreed with the state of Illinois to add additional measures and restrictions to its operating permit. This is also focused on managing the emissions generated in their building. The building was established under negative pressure and all emissions from the building were channeled through a control device. In the case of Sterigenics, that is, in Atlanta, Georgia, they also agreed with the state of Georgia on a permit with restrictions above what is established by the current regulations to increase their percentage of efficiency and focus their efforts also on channeling emissions from their building to a control system. It is also important to tell you, when talking about what is being done at Steri-Tech, the facility has been developing measures aimed at examples like these. I must at least inform you, that last Thursday I had the opportunity to visit there and see a lot of what is being done. We understand that in addition to informing them about the risk, we must also inform them that there are solutions, as that is what we are trying to do here. There are facilities that have achieved it and we understand that with these activities that we are doing, the efforts, the communications that we have been having with the facility, we can in a future activity, talk to you about more concrete projects that the facility is already close to implementing. Apart from the catalyst project that I was talking about, which increases the capacity of the facility from 99% to 99.9. This in combination with other actions, as it would lead us to be able to talk to them about success stories. That is what we want to achieve.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #27 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

I also wanted to take this opportunity to talk about the EtO monitoring project that was carried out a few weeks ago. We were here in the area for a little over a week doing a collection project, the idea is to collect information from the scope of EtO within the community. Several samplers were placed at six locations within the community. The sampling was carried out from August 10 to 17, 2022, with the cooperation of some people I see out there who helped us, giving us access to their residences and cooperating with us. In total, 48 samples were collected and are currently being analyzed. We hope that the results, the final report of this project will be available by November 2022 and the agency would like to be able to hold another meeting to share the results of this project.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #28 of the on-screen presentation.

**Alex Rivera:**

The following slide contains the 6 locations included to carry out the project - four locations within La Margarita community and La Margarita annex, a station in the Surmed Hospital and another one in Valles de Salinas, forgive me if I am mistaken, which is used as a reference, since it is upstream regarding the facility, therefore against the wind. And the other slide that I wanted to share with you, because it shows how they looked, maybe some of you were able to see it in the community, the type of sampler we used to carry out the project. Now I leave you with Joseph. Thanks a lot. And thanks to Margarita, and I wanted to thank the people who gave us access to their residence so we could carry out the project again, and Wanda who was quite helpful as well.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #29 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

Thank you very much, Alex. I imagine you are already mentally asking questions after the first part. We already provided the theory. What the problem is. What Alex just said shows

you by example that it can be done. You can reduce emissions and if you reduce emissions, you reduce the risk, which is what we are looking for. Now, in this part, before any questions, we are going to talk about the future actions of the agency. I had mentioned to you that we realized through science and its new developments, that ethylene oxide was more toxic than we thought. This means that the current regulations are not aligned with this scientific development. Therefore, we must establish new regulations to reflect these new findings and therefore require those who emit this substance to reduce their emissions, by regulation and by law. Therefore, to achieve that, the Agency proposes, or will propose, new regulation on ethylene oxide emissions this year. The public comment period will last 60 days. This is standard agency procedure. The final regulation is expected for 2023. Once the regulation is final, facilities generally have three years to comply with the new requirements, but we are going to be very aggressive trying to do what we are doing today, working with the facilities to take the necessary measures to reduce emissions. Now we are going to give you more details about that.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #30 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

In terms of worker safety, the EPA is working to use its authority under the Federal Pesticide Act to change the way ethylene oxide is used in sterilization facilities. What is the EPA doing? It is using all the tools at its disposal to reduce these emissions and protect workers. What did I just mention to you? We are using other federal statutes that protect workers to see how much faster, more assertively, we could protect workers; using all the tools at our disposal with the aim of protecting public health – workers, citizens, everyone. The EPA will propose specific and detailed measures to better protect workers' health. As part of this assessment, the EPA will coordinate with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which sets limits on worker exposure. The federal government agrees to use all its tools to reduce these emissions and protect workers and citizens.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #31 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

The timetable in terms of additional measures this year on ethylene oxide. It is intended to have new information on risks to workers and inside ethylene oxide facilities and people who work or attend classes near EtO facilities. It is planned to propose changes to the use of ethylene oxide within the facility in 2022. Public comment period. Once the changes are final, it usually takes several years for them to take effect. They will say well, because this is redundant with what I said earlier. I must stress that because therein lies the importance of this, that the agency is going to work and try to advance the ordinary processes of the agency to try to achieve those improvements. Tomás, were you going to add something on this, in terms of what we are going to do to reduce...?

**Tomás Carbonell:**

Here I will ask for the help of a translator. Thank you. We are working on a regulation, as you have all heard this evening, to reduce ethylene oxide emissions from commercial sterilizers.

**Interpreter:**

Como ya han escuchado. ¿Me escuchan? Gracias. Como ya han escuchado todos hoy estamos trabajando en una regulación para continuar trabajando en reducir las emisiones de óxido de etileno.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

This is one of the most important steps we can take to reduce emissions and risk from these facilities.

**Interpreter:**

Ese es uno de los pasos más importantes que podemos tomar para reducir las emisiones de estas instalaciones y los riesgos.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

And for the administration and for Administrator Regan, and for all of us at EPA, this is a top priority.

**Interpreter:**

Y para la administración, y para el señor Administrador Regan esto es uno de los asuntos más importantes.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

It does take time to develop a rule like this.

**Interpreter:**

Sí toma tiempo desarrollar una reglamentación como esta.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

So, we are working as quickly as we can to put out a proposal by the end of this year.

**Interpreter:**

Así que estamos trabajando tan rápido como podemos para presentar una propuesta ya para finales de este año.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

and in order to do that we have to collect lots of information and do lots of analysis to make sure that we are developing something that's effective.

**Intérprete:**

Y para poder hacer esto, tenemos que asegurarnos de que estamos recopilando mucha información y completando muchos análisis para asegurarnos de que podemos completar esta misión.



**Tomás Carbonell:**

Another important part of the process is getting comments and feedback from citizens and from stakeholders on the proposal; once it's out.

**Interpreter:**

Otra parte importante del proceso es asegurarnos que recibimos sus comentarios y la retroalimentación de todas las partes interesadas en este proceso.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

This is required by law.

**Interpreter:**

Esto es un requisito de ley.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

It's also an important way for us to make sure that we are taking account of your feedback and developing something that's again as effective as possible.

**Interpreter:**

Y también esto es importante para nosotros, para asegurarnos de que tomemos en cuenta la opinión de ustedes y también de que podamos desarrollar algo que sea efectivo.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

Our hope is to put out a final rule, taking account of comments, by the end of next year.

**Interpreter:**

Así que nosotros esperamos poder tomar su retroalimentación y poder ya completar este reglamento ya para finales del año.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

I'll also say, we're here this evening talking about sterilizers

**Interpreter:**

Hoy aquí, estamos hablando esta noche sobre los esterilizadores.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

But there are other types of facilities that can use ethylene oxide.

**Interpreter:**

Pero también hay otros tipos de instalaciones que pueden utilizar óxido de etileno.

**Lisa García:**

And we are also working on regulation for those types of facilities.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

Thank you.

**Interpreter:**

Gracias a todos.

**José Font:**

Thank you, Tomás. Gracias, Tomás. So, moving on here. We are now close to entering the question round and what I would like is to tie up everything we have been talking about this afternoon.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #32 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

I would like to explain this in a few key points. Collaboration with government entities and the industrial sector to reduce ethylene oxide from sterilization facilities. This facility is not the only one in Puerto Rico. There are others, and we are working with the government agencies that are represented here, including the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Health, to together achieve the goal of protecting public health and the environment. We are updating air pollution regulations to better protect your health. Tomás just explained it and told him what the agency sets out to do. And how we are using our tools to reduce that risk. We share these risk results with you so that you have the same information that we have. That is why we are here today. Because once science tells us that we have new information about the toxicity of ethylene oxide, it is our responsibility to share that information with you and at the same time let you know about all the actions we propose to take and what we are doing with the facilities, particularly with sterilizers to reduce emissions and therefore reduce the risk of developing cancer. Remember, long-term 70 years, if you are exposed 24 hours 7 days a week. Extremely conservative. That is the science we use to calculate risk. Carmen. Next one please, that one.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

Switched to slide #34 of the on-screen presentation.

**José Font:**

Here is where you can get more information about ethylene oxide. You can always call us. Later Carmen will give you more information about our contact info. Brenda Reyes is around, and she is the main contact for concerns you may have. But, Carmen.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Many thanks to both José and Alex for the technical presentation to help frame what is going to be the dialogue we are going to have now. This is the most important part of this meeting. The questions, the comments, the recommendations that you are going to be giving us now. But it was very important to give you this technical background and the

context of what the agency is doing in Puerto Rico and in the entire United States. We have already received several questions on index cards. As we told you, even if at the time of signing up you did not mention wanting to talk, you can talk. We will then carry out the process in an orderly manner. It is always important, as part of protocol, to allow elected officials to say if they have any questions or comments, and I wanted to ask officials if they have any questions or comments before moving on to the rest of the residents.

**Member of the public:**

I have several, but I prefer that...

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

We do not hear the end of your sentence since you don't use the microphone.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

OK. Excellent. In the attendance roster, first we had Miriam Santiago. We have a microphone.

**Miriam Santiago:**

I have many, so. But I want to intersperse them with the other participants every two or three who ask questions, then you may call on me again and I come back and ask.

**Transcriptionist:**

Excuse me, before we start talking, we need to have each person say their name so that it is recorded in the transcript. Thank you.

**Miriam Santiago:**

Ok, good evening, neighbors. Miriam Santiago, a resident here of the community for 40 years. We have heard a lot about the studies and knowledge we have about the harmful

effects of ethylene oxide. The reality is that since the 1940s it is already known, there are already some studies that indicated how harmful this gas is. So it is already conclusively confirmed that it causes cancer, various types of cancer. So, the last thing we saw here is the EPA's action plan that is going to take about two or three years, until some regulations are established. We are here today, right? We are here every day exposed to the effects of that gas. It seems a bit inappropriate to talk about 2–3-year solutions. So, my question that remains there is whether the local EPA, along with the government agencies, our mayor, our assembly members -- I think we have the representative here, I do not know who she is -- if they are willing to establish local regulation, as the jurisdictions of Illinois, California and North Carolina have done. Regulations can be established at the local level and then at the Puerto Rico level in order to streamline these processes and we do not have to wait two or three years to ensure that the company complies with the parameters that minimize the effects. That is my question.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much for the question. I think in that sense, that is why it is part of the collaboration that is taking place with the Department of Natural Resources, particularly because it is the agency that has the air program. As Alex mentioned just now, construction permit processes are already underway so that the facility can already make necessary changes to be able to advance and reduce emissions, even before the EPA has already approved its regulations. Specifically, about the question of whether right now there is a consideration of a public policy at the local level, because I am not sure if the Department has that answer at the moment. I imagine that this is something that should also be consulted at the level of the Secretariat. In fact, I want to excuse the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources because she wanted to be here today, but she is away on an official trip and therefore could not get here and sent her work team. But that approach is a very valid approach because, as you know, at the federal level there is a regulation with minimum requirements. Local agencies can comply with them or go further and have more stringent regulation than at the federal level. So that question, I know that the colleagues from the Department take it and we can bring you information soon about what that answer could be. Thank you. I know you have other questions so now we will come back to them. I want to allow; I have José Santiago. José. And I know someone else raised their hand out there. And then I want to go through the list. To follow different...

## **José Santiago:**

I did not really come prepared to give any kind of presentation or anything, but I have gotten involved in terms of what we are talking about and my experience. I worked for 27 years in a petrochemical facility where there was a lot of pollution. I heard many times someone from here in Salinas who was called Tata Santiago, there was a lot of talk about her in terms of how she defended the environment. I always believe more in truth than friendship. I really do not give up truth for friendship. And things must be said. Truth does not need diplomacy to be told. In my experience, when I worked there in the petrochemical plant and climbed to other levels. There was a lot of pollution there. There are two fundamental things about this. If you do not know, you have no way of acting to solve a problem, and if you are not impacted you do not care, you do not do anything either. And that happens very often. In terms of government agency, we have had a lot of bad experiences, because it is a reality, and if the community does not take the initiative, it does not happen. But at that time in the petrochemical plant there were people who lived on the other side, and since it did not impact them, they did not care. And no, you cannot think individually, because it does not impact me, I do not care, we cannot think that way. This week after we met with you last time, some people approached me with their concerns, some in one way, others in a different way. Why is it now, after so long, that we are dealing with this? Other people say that if they cannot fix it they leave and create unemployment. Well, there are things that need to be said. We do not really know since when ethylene is being used in Steri-Tech's facilities. Since when the EPA knows... Since, supposedly, since 2016 and we learned about it recently. We do not have the agreement. The long-term justifies the unjustifiable. When it is called long-term, well, 70 years, 24 hours. How much of a pollutant? It is what we do not see. If we go to the facilities. In the same facilities, most people there do not know exactly what dangers they are facing by working there. There is no government agency there monitoring to determine how much ethylene was being dumped into the environment. There are many things there. There are things left unsaid, but we must be more honest in terms of things as we say them. The community is impacted, whoever is not impacted does not care. We are impacting ourselves and in a big way. And we are not going to stop because it is not like we are going to get there and we are going to be here. We have been trying for a long time to come up with some statistics and so on, which from my point of view, being honest with you, I do not consider real. We have had many experiences with government agencies. A lot of honest people, actually willing to help, but there are interests that tie them down, those people, so they do not really work the way they should. And if we, the community,

do not take care and do not worry, even though there are a lot of good intentions on the part of those government agencies, of many people in those government agencies, the initiative must be ours because we are the ones impacting ourselves. And what are we doing? We cannot stop. We are not going to sit and wait, because we all... Look, promises we have been hearing those for decades. Promises that are not kept. They are not fulfilled. And it is nice to come and say, "Here's what we're going to do." Look, we are not going to soften it. It is not 70 years, 24/7. It is knowing who has been there monitoring to determine what is polluting us, since when they are polluting us. I have been here for 30 years in this community. I know that in 30 years they have been polluting us for 30 years. And when do we find out? Who has done anything? Nobody. Now in 2016, they know; in 2022 they bring us the information. And where are we? Well, we are dying in here. We are dying. And whoever does not live here, who lives elsewhere, who makes the money, is not impacted, does not worry. That is why we must be the ones who must take the initiative and fight with our community and will not wait for anyone. The government does what it can, helps us up to a certain point. But if the government does not know, it does not help us either. And if whoever is in government has no interest or is not harmed, or is not impacted, he does not care either. We cannot go on like this. The community cannot pave the way and wait for them to solve it. The community must rise and they must fight for their rights, for the health of their people. Because it is not us older people, it is the children who are growing up now who are being impacted. That is why it is important for us to be interested, excited and to unite and fight for our rights and fight for our health. That is important. We cannot keep waiting for them to come and tell us, "This is what we're going to do. Look, in the government there is a lot of "proto" and a lot of "col," but that is all. A lot of "proto" and a lot of "col." And in the government, there are many procedures that are not complied with and there are companies that have procedures that never apply them and never use them. And also no government agencies go there to check if they are complying with those procedures. Not even the same people who work within the companies, who know that there is a lot of pollution, as they are not aware that they are contaminated. They die too. And that happens and we cannot continue to allow it. I know I have talked a lot; I would like to say many other things, I did not come prepared for this. Thank you.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

José, thank you very much for your comments. We take them and appreciate your point of view. Extremely important. I have Nadya Rivera.

**Nadya Rivera:**

Good evening. I introduce myself to the community. My name is Nadya Rivera. I am a researcher in air pollution and lung function and mental health. So, I introduce myself to you as well. I have some very specific questions, particularly for Alex Rivera. My question is very quick. The exorbitant amount of the pollutant is because it combines what they are emitting, which is regulated and that which is not regulated? Because those were the two emissions that appeared in the chart. It seems a bit unusual to say that there is a very exorbitant amount, just because doors are opened and because they are changing from one vehicle to another. That if most emissions are coming from that source, there is more research to do. Also... Sorry if I change to English I work in a company where English is spoken. There are polluters, for example, fence line monitors, fence lines can be put around the facility and could be maintained for a few months that would be collecting data. If they need it for their prompt regulations. The other thing is children, it has been said already that they are the most exposed. They are the most exposed, obviously, because they are in the process of development, they are running, they are exposed to air. In this heat you cannot assume, you cannot even suggest, or tell people to close the door and install a filter. That is not real life, it does not make sense. I know they did not suggest it, but that would be the other, logical. Steps to follow. Not only that, but I understand that they have done research or collected data for a few weeks. A few weeks is not enough. To say how much it impacts a human being you would have to go to the bio marker and obviously that would be an invasive process towards people, towards the community. We do not want that. But it is just so you know, then, the level you are monitoring in the air is much lower, or it is not directly telling you how it impacts the person's body. That is already a scientific fact. The other thing is that it is not just cancer, it is health problems, lung function; small children who develop having asthma problems, dermatitis problems, issues that parents face and end up having to go to more doctors, they mean more expenses. In other words, to say that the solution is three years from now, as you have said before, it is not. I understand that if it is a matter of collecting data there are many others... I mean, there are four other centers... Well, including this one there are 3 other facilities that are also emitting excess EtO. I understand that they can collect that data and draft, as they say, a bill at the Puerto Rico legislature level. That is, they do not have



to wait to collect more data, because we have been studying the effect of EtO on the human body for decades and children are the most exposed, because of all their development process. So it seems to me that the process can be streamlined if we are talking about data. Second, we must always take into consideration that the data we are receiving is an indirect marker of the damage we are experiencing in our bodies. So, not only is it urgent, but the tools we are having do not even tell us the precise damage they are doing. And we are not going to see it, as they said a few years from now. But anyway, short-term, and long-term plans should exist, not just long-term. That is all. Thank you.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Nadya, thank you very much for your comments. I do not know if we have any answers to the questions.

**Alex Rivera:**

I would appreciate it, because you said a lot of quite interesting things, but I understand that you directed a specific one towards me that I would like to be able to hear, if you repeat it because I understand that it was... Let me see what I understood first and please, if you need to interrupt me... I understand that you meant the slide showing uncontrolled emissions, which are fugitive emissions from the process, and the result of the risk modeling we are talking about. When we talk about risk, in addition to the emissions from the stack, other items are also considered, as José mentioned, the climate, the item related to the proximity of the facility to residents. It is not necessarily an indicator or a link to extremely high emissions. That is why I was also telling you that compliance with current regulations is not a guarantee. Because we have cases of facilities that show continuous compliance, their emissions are low, but being close to a community, it increases that risk. When talking about fugitive emissions they are a component, although compared to the stack component, it is a minor one, but it is part of those emissions that are being modeled. The example of the doors, the example of the storage area, considers the type of operation that is carried out in the facility where the pollutant, the gas, is being handled, and where there could be some type of fugitive emission, and when these emissions are evaluated in the model, it is considered. In these areas, where there could be fugitive emissions, a factor is established to be able to model. Yes, it is true, for this type of emissions, we do not have a specific numerical value of each facility, because the model does not go into that detail for each facility. It was established based on another

facility, as you very well mention. A much more detailed evaluation of facilities with similar operations was made to develop these factors that were used in the model; in the case of fugitives. In the case of controlled and regulated ones, there is more specific information.

**Nadya Rivera:**

The reason I ask the question is because, then what we are measuring would be the combination, those regulated and those unregulated. Correct? Because that is what people outside are exposed to.

**Alex Rivera:**

The model considers both emissions currently being controlled and regulated, and considers this other portion of fugitive emissions within the risk outcome.

**Nadya Rivera:**

Yes. Then I agree with what the initial colleague said, that the solution - using colloquial language - this idea of turning off the stack and you stop the problem, right? But we are seeing that it would be a stack that has like a leak, so to speak. So, the question is what is causing these levels to be above harmful? Is it the leakage? Or is it what comes out of the stack? Because if it is from the stack, it is a matter of how much the company is doing. It is a Steri-Tech problem. But if something is leaking, then it is another thing that also shows that we do not have any kind of measure.

**Alex Rivera:**

I really like the way you explained it, maybe much simpler than how I explained it. But it is a combination. The percentage associated with the risk of these fugitive emissions; we are talking about an amount well below what we could be talking about the stack. We are talking about a much lower gas flow, as I mentioned. Yes, that is why we use the term "non-contracted" because they are emissions that we can handle. They are emissions that the facility, along with, or in combination with a more efficient control equipment, could then manage and reduce the risk to concentrations and achieve an acceptable result. It is not that leaking, as you describe, is the problem. Again, it is the combination.

And we are not talking about understanding that the facility is operating with leaks, because it is not. It is a good way to describe it, but it is not what is actually happening. It is not that we are evaluating a series of leaks that occur in the facility, but it is a component of these emissions that are being evaluated, that we want and understand, that can be reduced in combination with the controlled emission of the stack. That is a project that can be visualized. There is a control equipment that increases that percentage of removal. The facility has already invested in that equipment. Obviously, there must also be another project focused on reducing that component of fugitive emissions that could be occurring in the facility.

**Nadya Rivera:**

Thank you.

**Alex Rivera:**

Thank you for explaining it very well.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, because I think that this issue of differentiation between controlled and uncontrolled... Did you want to mention something? I have José Colón.

**José Colón:**

Good afternoon, everyone, I am José Colón. I am a resident here of La Margarita. As a former co-worker, I spent 18 years working in petrochemicals. Those last 18 years I was lucky that we were more proactive in terms of leaks, because even once a month, one of my weeks, I was supposed to walk around with a 45-pound backpack on my back monitoring any leaks in the plant, to be proactive if we detected something in time, it was corrected. I have my doubts... I do know the owner personally and I agree with him. I have my doubts as to whether they are also proactive about that, because of what the young woman mentioned about sleeve or joint leaks. I do not know if that equipment pipe has welded or unwelded flanges. Because if they are not welded and these are flanges with "gaskets", there may be leaks. What kind of monitoring are they doing about this? If any. Or on the gates, which have mechanical seals, if they are doing this. And those are details

that are not statistically speaking, in the "charts" of the equipment, but they can have an impact in terms of leaks or emissions into our atmosphere. I liked what was just mentioned that they put four monitors to start monitoring the area of La Margarita to see how effective the controls are. That is a good thing. But they did not mention, for example in the long term, what kind of pollution has already occurred and if they are going to do monitoring in terms of underground or soil samples. We have a water well, because in Salinas the water is underground, there is a well. Our well is in front of Steri-Tech. I have my concerns that it is already contaminated, because one thing is the emissions that are burned, but the cleaning method for decontamination, if they stick hoses at some point or not and contaminate soils, by percolating that cleaning water. As I do not know details of the plant, that is one of the concerns I have. The other one, in terms of health tests, I would like if they could include those, even if it is a "spot check" of x number of people. If they can do the analysis at least of portions they have. It does not have to be the whole community. But to know what status we are in. Because I was worried when they just mentioned the 6 people. We are already above those 6 people. Because here people have died of cancer in this development, more than 6 by far. Right now, there are cancer patients. When I owned a business here, one of my clients had already had cancer surgery three times and he lives here. He is still alive. The water I mentioned. Those would be in general the concerns I have as a resident. As to the company, I have no complaints about them. They are people we can deal with, amenable people. At least with Mr. Vivoni, tremendous person for me, towards me. In his ups and downs, because I also know those, but he is a tremendous person in my opinion.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much for the comments and questions. I know there were some specific questions about soil and water. From the scientific information that the Federal Environmental Protection Agency has so far, there is no indication that there is an exposure or concern for water and soil, specifically. As for the request for health studies, public health analyses, epidemiological studies, it is a request that has been presented at previous meetings. We take that as a task. Specifically, we must work with other agencies that are experts in this area, such as ATSDR, obviously in collaboration with the Puerto Rico Department of Health. We know that in the communities of Salinas and Guayama there is a lot of collaboration, also with universities, the School of Public Health, with which we can also collaborate to be able to work on these studies. So, we are

committed that request will be forthcoming and how to respond to it in order to meet that request, already received in several of the meetings prior to the public meeting, from the Municipal Legislature, the mayor and the residents themselves with whom we met here at the Community Center. So, in our follow-up meeting we will be giving you that information. It is important that when health items are mentioned, the EPA cannot comment on specific medical elements, and we urge you to see a reference from the CDC about ethylene oxide and that information can be taken to your primary care physician to be able to analyze case by case. There they give all that background information, what kind of studies should be done. Much of this information focuses on what has been the impact of inhalation for workers on the facilities of commercial ethylene oxide stabilizers. Then following the list, I also wanted to move on now to the next comment. We have Victor Alvarado.

**Víctor Alvarado:**

Good evening to all. I thank you Lisa - greetings Lisa - José, Carmen for being here today. As I told the staff during the visit that the EPA administrator had in Guayama, in life there is a time for everything. There is a time to protest to the EPA and there is a time to sit down with the EPA to discuss and listen to these comments that are so important. I would like, if possible, if they could put the map up where the blue cloud that José was using is. First, I think it is important that Steri-Tech is setting up new equipment to try to put out less pollution into the air. And that is the technical part of it. And it is important what the EPA is doing to be more rigorous in the use of ethylene oxide. That is the administrative part. But as some people from the community commented and Carmen mentioned now, it seems to me that this issue of health is very important; that the numbers be obtained and that health studies be carried out. The least I could think of is that the people who live inside that blue cloud - and they must be mentioned - are La Margarita and Brisas del Mar, which are the closest. We have the people of Villa Cofresí. There are people from Los Poleo, from the town. Much of the people are also within that cloud. The least one would think is that if long-term exposure to ethylene oxide causes breast cancer, lymphatic cancer, and leukemia, I must do a study that determines how many people within that cloud have that type of cancer. And I understand what they were telling us the other time, that we must limit ourselves to those cancers, because that is what ethylene oxide causes. But the EPA itself on its website says that "short-term exposure by inhalation of high amounts of ethylene oxide can cause headache, dizziness, nausea,

fatigue and respiratory irritation such as coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing and in some cases vomiting and other gastrointestinal upsets. So, I would think that at least, at a minimum, within that area that has already been established, also within those numbers, it should be established how many people suffer from these conditions in the short term. And there is something that also remains unsaid, that is also found on the EPA's website. Similarly, land animals living near facilities that release ethylene oxide outdoors can be exposed and impacted by it. So, how many of our animals at home, which you have, have died from conditions you never knew. Suddenly the dog, cat came up with whatever cancer appeared. And I also believe that within that cloud that is there, within that survey that can be done, we need to know how many of our pets, right? - because there are other animals on the streets as well - how many have been impacted. Because that is what the EPA states on its page too. I also have a question, because I had heard it before and today, they said it again, about the release of rust into water or soil. My question is if there is no problem, because studies show it or because there are not enough studies. Can you establish it? José was the one who was mentioning that there are no problems in the soil and in the water. But I want to know if it is because studies have been done and they have shown that there are no problems, or is it that there are not enough studies that can show if the water and the land are contaminated. I had other questions, but I also want to hear from the people in the community. I know - my childhood spent in Brisas del Mar and obviously from La Margarita I am also a native here, because I have many friends here - and I know, even people who have been denouncing for years the effects they have, the complaints they have had, the complaints they took to the Environmental Quality Board and were never heard. There are some of those people who are not here this evening, not because they cannot get there but because they died. I know. There is one person especially who told me look, "Something's going on at Steri-Tech, I see a cloud at night there." There are people here from Brisas del Mar, who have also been impacted. I told Carmen the other time. People who could smell and felt that and the body reacted. So, I think a lot remains to be done. So, my most basic concern is about health studies and that this data is taken into consideration, everything that the EPA itself has established on its page. And the question I asked about soil and water. Thank you.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, Victor. And as I said earlier, with the question that José had asked and that request, we take it as a task, the subject of health studies. Regarding water, I wanted to allow...

**José Font:**

Thank you very much, Victor. I agree with the comments, very accurate, totally valid concerns. With respect to the concern about ethylene oxide, focusing, saying no concerning water or soil, but yes in the air because precisely what we are talking about is a gas that is being emitted into the air, which through inhalation exposure represents this risk that exceeds the safe thresholds established by the agency. That is why we are working that way. It is unlikely that this gas reaches the soil and can contaminate water supplies or soil, by its nature and how it is used here by sterilizers. Perhaps in the other uses that are given as anti-freeze and its presence in other things, then that would have to be seen. But at this very moment what we are working on is that. We could also take this with us and see where the data comes from. I do not know if we could come back on that, for another conversation that I am sure we are going to have, and maybe do a little more research regarding these other uses that ethylene oxide has. But today we focus on sterilizers and gas.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you, Jose. And I would like to add, it is the scientific information that the agency has till now, where these indications have been established analyzing the duration in the water, the duration in the soil and the reaction with bacteria, etc. So, in essence, it is the information that is available. Indeed, we must also recognize, science changes and it is through these changes in science that new public policies are established. That is why we are here today. There was information about this pollutant. It was regulated to a certain level. There is new technical and scientific information. There is then a need to further increase how these emissions are regulated and controlled. I have several questions in writing as well. I would also like to give the opportunity to those who submitted their questions on the Index Cards. How long and how does EPA monitor these industries? How can it be checked and how safe and reliable is the plant's safety plan? I think these are more technical questions. How long and how does EPA monitor these industries?

**Alex Rivera:**

In the case of the sterilization facility, as I mentioned, it is subject to federal regulation, under Subpart O that indicated. It establishes monitoring requirements, reports that the facility must submit every six months to the Regulatory Agency. It also establishes that, for control equipment, efficiency tests must be carried out where the equipment is operated in conditions such as more extreme scenarios, in order to demonstrate compliance with the requirement of 99% efficiency. In these tests they establish the operational parameters in which this equipment must operate. Based on these results, monitoring parameters are established, either temperature- or concentration-based. The agency conducts periodic inspections or may also request information as was done to develop this entire modeling exercise. Inspections have also been carried out in the facilities to not only get to know their operation, but also identify compliance issues. But in general, what is used to determine compliance with these facilities is based on the operational performance of these control equipment. It is what we focus on at this type of facility, that the amount of ethylene oxide established in their permit is handled and used. These facilities have a limited use of ethylene oxide, and control equipment must be used based on what is established by the manufacturer of each control equipment. Just like a vehicle, this control equipment has several maintenance requirements. This also must be carried out and ensure that these specifications are being met and performance is key to be able to guarantee that whatever goes through that control equipment, a minimum 99% reduction is guaranteed. There was also a question about safety plans. As for safety plans, OSHA is responsible for ensuring that the facility has, not only the proper procedures to ensure the safety of its employees, but also the proper procedures to handle any type of situation that impacts its employees. As part of the regulations, we do not require a specific plan, but the operating permit established by Natural Resources also requires that they have procedures for emergency management. In case you have any other specific questions about what the facility is doing, the facility's representatives are also here. They would gladly answer a question specific to their operation.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you, Alex. And on this card, they are also asking specifically about worker safety. "If employees had direct contact with the substance due to company mismanagement, what and how can the damage be determined and how are they tested to see if people were impacted in their long-term health? Specifically, that is why the issue of occupational



safety is very important. We recommend that any information you have can be handled through OSHA's Puerto Rico office. Here is the phone number 787-754-2176. Likewise, the CDC's ATSDR page specifically provides information. As we said, we cannot make medical diagnoses, connect some type of disease to a particular pollutant. We can make these long-term projections about risks to the community of inhaling this pollutant. Specifically, the CDC and through this ATSDR agency have created guidelines that you can take to your primary care physician so that you can make those specific health consultations. Both you in the community and the workers. In fact, much of the research the agency uses to do risk analysis is for information and studies that have been done on workers at sterilization facilities throughout the United States. So here is also the information about the "Clinician Brief", the summary for all primary care physicians and health professionals on this topic and there are the various phone numbers you can call about this. Any other questions can also be brought to us and we will refer you to the respective contacts. I want to let you know that this presentation in its entirety, as was requested by the mayor, is going to be uploaded to the EPA website, we are going to share it with the municipality, with the community, so that they can upload it to the networks and the internet and that the community, the various communities of Salinas can have access to it. So, moving on to other questions that I know I have here also someone who also wanted to address the public, **Javi Rodríguez**.

**Javi Rodríguez:**

Good evening, everyone. Welcome to every member of every federal, state, and municipal agency. Simply what I want is to ask a question that may sound simple, but since we do not know the answers, we ask them. Among them, because we want to ask; regardless of the results that come out, of the tests that are going to be done, of the monitoring, which is supposed to come by November, if before those results arrive, if the residents of the town of Salinas wanted to use some laboratory to perform those tests, what specific laboratory is authorized or prepared to perform toxicological tests of chemicals like the one we are talking about this evening? Blood tests, urine tests, or hair tests. What laboratory exists in Puerto Rico that can carry out this test, reliably? That is a question. I do not know if they want to answer it now or if I go on with the others.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

We do not have laboratory-specific information. Now, on the website and on this reference for primary care physicians they establish the studies that are recommended both for people in the community, for children and workers in sterilizer facilities and provide various recommendations of the studies that can be carried out. So that is why we recommend, as far as possible, that when consulting your primary care physicians, health professionals, bring this information with you so that you can let them know, "I live near a facility, a facility that emits ethylene oxide into the air and I want to know what the risks are."

**Javi Rodríguez:**

Once these laboratory tests are carried out, confirming in fact and conclusively that someone was impacted, health-wise, because of the chemical that is produced. Who bears these costs? Is it the patient or is it the industry to bear those expenses that must be incurred? Because once it is proven and confirmed that that person has cancer because of what was produced in the industry, how are they going to deal with that? Who is going to bear those expenses? Can anyone answer me?

**Carmen Guerrero:**

It is a question that we do not have the answer now. Obviously, concerning various public health effects it is difficult to establish a direct connection with various diseases, with various pollutants people are exposed to in the air and other exposures that exist. Specifically, who bears those expenses, we do not have that information right now. The exposure that we are talking about is a long-term exposure and therefore we want to take action now to avoid that long-term exposure of these projections that have been established, that long-term exposure can lead to certain types of cancer.

**Javi Rodríguez:**

Ok. I want to ask Mr. Alex Rivera how much of the chemical is currently under control, as a percentage, in your industry? At Steri-Tech.

**Alex Rivera:**

Yes, the industry is not mine, but I get the question. I thought you were addressing me as Steri-Tech. But to answer your question, the equipment they have right now, the thermal oxidizer, is at least capable of guaranteeing 99% gas destruction.

**Javi Rodríguez:**

Excuse me. How much?

**Alex Rivera:**

99% efficient in reducing EtO gas that is processed through it. This is associated with the provisions of the regulations covered in the operating permit and what is established by the Clean Air Law.

**Javi Rodríguez:**

And how can we residents confirm that?

**Alex Rivera:**

Well, we are working with the facility precisely to not only ensure that 99% is met, but if that is not so, that they start using equipment that is 99.9% efficient in reducing emissions. That is what is being worked on.

**Javi Rodríguez:**

Ok. Mr. Rivera, will there be any substitute for ethylene oxide as a raw material for sterilization? In other words, you do not necessarily have to use that chemical that is so powerful, so toxic, so harmful. Will there be any substitutes? Because today technology, that is, everything is under development and there is a substitute for everything and for medications, all medications have substitutes. Is there a substitute Steri-Tech can use? Because by the way, what they are using clearly produces cancer, whether it is short-term or long-term.

**Alex Rivera:**

That is a very good question. The issue with EtO right now is that, in order to guarantee the sterilization of various medical equipment and devices that are sterilized, as I mentioned now, that sterilization procedure is set by the FDA. In the case of Steri-Tech, they provide a service to the customer. The customer is the one who carries out the validation process approved by the FDA. If there is currently no exposure to a chemical or sterilization process that guarantees sterilization of that medical device, companies like Steri-Tech and others have no alternative but to use the method established by the FDA. This is not only to carry out sterilization, but also to guarantee that the medical device they use for a surgical procedure or any other type of implant or dental equipment, catheter, pacemaker, the FDA must guarantee that this equipment once it enters your body will not harm you. And for that there is the validation procedure established by the FDA. The companies, the customers of Steri-Tech say "Look, I need you to sterilize this control equipment, I need you to follow this sterilization procedure" in simple terms. But it is not so easy for sterilizers to change methods because they are governed by what the FDA establishes. If the FDA changes its process and says, "Look, this pacemaker or this catheter is going to be sterilized using this new method," then other companies or Steri-Tech itself might say, "look, I'm going to change my sterilization method" in response to your customer.

**Javi Rodríguez:**

In other words, the FDA, knowing that this product causes cancer, does not require or force the company to change and use a substitute? Knowing that it causes cancer. Even the FDA does not oblige you, that is, does not require you to find another substitute? It does not demand it? I will end with this question. I am going to finish with this one. What are the times most exposed to these emissions? That will be all. What are the times most exposed to this ethylene product? The hours that the industry is emitting those emissions into the air; if it is during the day, at night, at dawn. Because it says they are working 24/7. It operates 24/7. Of those 24 hours we want to know which times have the most exposure to those emissions. If it is at noon, in the afternoon, when we are sleeping. Because I smelled an odd scent at dawn. I mean, at dawn I smelled an odd scent, while I was in bed. And that makes me suspect something is off. I mean, now I do not want to think we are going to have to wear masks while sleeping. Even while sleeping. Yes, because honestly, honestly, I have smelled it. I have smelled that. It is a mild smell in the early morning hours. That is why I asked him the question. What are the peak hours or the

times when there is the most exposure to these emissions? That is the question. It has no answer. Ok, thanks.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

I want to allow Steri-Tech, through their representative, to provide information. And then I take advantage of the fact that we have Steri-Tech. We have several questions from the participants. They ask "We have already heard about the EPA actions, we would like to hear from Steri-Tech, their commitment to the community and actions to take." "Why is it that Steri-Tech does not take part in the conversation?" "Where and when do they have knowledge of what has impacted us?" "Do they have a genuine commitment to making arrangements before legislation is passed?" "Do you have a public apology for the community?" These are the questions that residents have asked.

**Andrés Vivoni:**

Good evening, everyone. My name is Andrés Vivoni. I will try to clarify your questions, as far as I can. We operate 24/7, but we are not release emissions 24/7. We have four sterilization chambers, but they operate in "batches". That is, you place the product in the chamber and it runs a cycle that can last from 8 to 10 hours, where it is not always carrying gas to the stack. It is almost always one-third of that cycle. That is, we understand that out of the 24 hours it should not exceed 12 hours of gas emissions to the stack, which suggests that this 70-year-old statistic would double, it would rise to 140, because we are not emitting 24/7. These are the opinions we have and we respect yours. We are indeed committed.

**Member of the public:**

Someone in the audience makes a comment or asks a question with no microphone.

**Andrés Vivoni:**

All four chambers do not operate at the same time. There are no specific schedules. That is, our work is based on "FIFO, First In, First Out". So, we work three shifts, 24/7 and at different times because the cycles are running. It is not at any specific time.

**Transcriptionist's Note:**

The community starts making comments and asking questions, all at once with no microphones. The transcriber requests that, for the purposes of the transcription, for your comments to be included, you need to use the microphone and say your name so that it is recorded in the audio.

**Lourdes Ramos:**

I just said I was not going to talk. But all the questions she asked about Steri-Tech were written by me. Yes, he said that Steri-Tech is working at 99%, so I wonder why we are here, if it is working at 99%. I feel like a victim because I coughed a lot just now, and people next to me move away, but after 45 years living in this development, I have developed a chronic cough due to hyperreactivity, that is, I cough all the time. So, my apologies to those who are scared by my cough. But I asked if there is a public apology. Since when do they know they are impacting us? What is your projection? And the question for him is, if it is working as he told you, how does it work at 99%? Well, why are we here and why the EPA's concern?

**Andrés Vivoni:**

In other words, the danger of EtO is nothing new, it has always been known. In 2016, it emerges that it is more dangerous than previously thought. But it has always been known that it is a gas that causes cancer and the current regulation is that it should be controlled 99%. In other words, we are operating within what the law establishes. We are committed, considering this new information, to controlling that even more. So, even though it is not required by law, we are working with the agency, we are working with the relevant agencies to voluntarily move forward to best practices. We are indeed committed. Yes, we are acting. We are also there every day operating, physically inside the chambers. We are aware of all that and we are acting on it. We offer - to answer the question of the employees - we provide training annually where the gas manufacturer from the United States comes to our plant, to give first-hand information to employees about the danger of the gas. That is the first thing. We also have agencies that regulate us such as OSHA, the EPA, the FDA. They come in periodically, typically every two years and do an inspection. In these inspections, they verify that our documentation is up to date, that we are carrying things out as required by law. OSHA makes us do periodic monitoring and

we do comply with them, as recorded in documents kept in our office. So, we are following periodic OSHA monitoring. Likewise, the EPA comes and audits us. Since 2018 they are working closely with us. They have audited fugitive emissions with relevant equipment. They ask questions and I think that as far as the agencies that regulate us, they have the right information. Likewise, because I am here to be able to talk to you openly, to have complete transparency. We have been part of this community for a very long time and have always been committed to you and to advance Salinas. You may count on our cooperation. We already have a equipment there that is going to reach 99.9, which is not the law, but we are moving towards that. That equipment has been in our facilities since 2019. We are waiting for permission to use it. In addition, and excuse me, we have other equipment that was acquired to control fugitive emissions. That equipment is currently in our facilities. Our doors have been opened to the media, our doors have been opened to the community and they have physically seen those pieces of equipment. We are waiting for permits to put them into use.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

I wanted to ask people who have raised their hands, that when they speak please state name and community or entity they represent.

**Jeanette Pérez:**

Good evening. I think everyone already knows me, right? My name is Jeanette Perez. I know you do not. About the map that you had, which was provided by the EPA, concerning the cloud, because that is like a cloud. In the article that the lady gave to Primera Hora, which was very good, of course, I congratulate her, because it was the only way I could understand this. She says those emissions do not travel. She says, "It is a problem located in the surrounding communities." There is the cloud. I mean, it does not travel. How long does that cloud remain in place since emissions start? Is it there all the time? Because it does not travel. It remains stationary. And I would like to know, because when I saw the slide, logically I saw the darkest portion showing the most exposed, because it is closer to Steri-Tech. When I saw that I did not travel and that it is a local problem, logically, the surrounding communities are us, part of the people, of Esperanza and everything. How long does that cloud remain there? Because it does not travel. Does it disappear? What does the cloud do? How long it stays there? Because it really is a valid question that I ask myself. Because then I would be exposed, if it is more

than 24 hours, it would be 48, because then it would be there all the time. How long does that emission take? If it goes away, if it stays in the air. Because it does not travel and so I would like someone I do not know, I imagine EPA could answer that question. I think we are even more exposed. I thought that maybe it would go in a certain way, it would dissipate, maybe the emission. It was not as toxic in the long run or within a reasonable time. But I would like, if someone has the answer, which I understand to be very valid, to give us that explanation.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you so much. Thank you for the question and you will help us answer the question, because it is very valid. One issue that I wanted to clarify before moving on with Rick is when we talked about that it is something local, for example, in our office we started getting calls from people, for example from Cayey, and they were asking us: "can this contamination from Steri-Tech in Salinas reach Cayey?" And no, it is pollution that is in a localized area. Specifically, I am aware that it looks like a cloud, but in essence it is important to know what risk analysis is. It defines the risk area where José just mentioned, one in 10,000 people is at risk of long-term exposure to health risks, particularly specific cancers. So, it is more like a definition as to where, with the information we have about emissions of the facility, projections of what the winds are, how the climate behaves in this area. Based on that it is specifically defined. How long does ethylene oxide last in air? And now we talked about that they have cycles in the production and sterilization process, meaning that it is not used 24 hours a day, they go through specific production cycles. Rick is going to talk a little more in detail about how EtO behaves in the air.

**Rick Ruvo:**

Perfect. So, Carmen is correct. That is not a graphic of the emissions.

**Interpreter:**

Eso no es un diagrama de las emisiones. No es una nube.

**Rick Ruvo:**

That is the result of a computer modeling analysis EPA does.



**Interpreter:**

Esto es el resultado de un modelaje que hace la organización, la EPA, para que puedan ver los límites del área.

**Rick Ruvo:**

And there are many factors that are put into that computer model.

**Interpreter:**

Muchos factores se entran en esa computadora para llevar a cabo este tipo de modelaje.

**Rick Ruvo:**

So, we take the emission data from the facility.

**Interpreter:**

Tomamos los datos de emisión de la facilidad.

**Rick Ruvo:**

And we factor in the weather, local weather, wind data.

**Interpreter:**

Tomamos en cuenta los datos del clima en el área el viento. La dirección del viento.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

Population near the facilities. So, the diagram shows where the risk assessment is affected by the computer analysis.

**Interpreter:**

También se toma en cuenta dónde están los residentes, cómo se organiza la población en relación a la facilidad. Así que lo que están viendo ahí no es una nube. Es básicamente el área de riesgo, de posibles riesgos por las emisiones.

**Rick Ruvo:**

The other I would just add to what Carmen said...

**Interpreter:**

Lo que yo añadiría a lo que les explicó Carmen...

**Rick Ruvo:**

...is the further away from the facility, the emissions are dissipated. So that is why at the edges of the blue area, there's less risk.

**Interpreter:**

Las emisiones se disipan. Estamos hablando de que en esos bordes que ustedes ven en el área de delimitación, pues ahí va a haber menos riesgo.

**Rick Ruvo:**

The question also was how long it stays in the air.

**Interpreter:**

La pregunta también fue cuánto tiempo eso está en el aire.

**Rick Ruvo:**

And that's not something we know. Again, it's depending on many factors, such as the wind and how much is emitted and for how long.

**Interpreter:**

Así que esa respuesta no es 100% clara. Eso va a depender de cuánto se emite, de la dirección del viento, de otras condiciones climáticas.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you, Rick. I know we have several questions and that specific data as well, from scientific information that the agency has provided, in terms of how much time it stays in the environment is about 48 hours. In other words, it then dissipates into the environment. But we can get you the studies that specifically establish that. And obviously what Rick said just now, how fast the wind comes, how far it takes it and how it dissipates over time. I have a question here. Yes, please you can come up here. Name and sector.

**José Cora:**

José Cora from Rancho Guayama I am not from here in the community, but I was here. I was not going to ask questions, but I see here the EPA page says it takes 69 days to 149, not 48 hours. And it is on the same EPA page on dissipating the contaminant. And so, I am very curious, where did they get the numbers to estimate how many people with cancer and how long it will take for cancer to develop? Whereas in this community there are many people with cancer and what are the studies that have been done to identify and get those numbers? And the other thing I want to know is what is each agency going to do? Because it is a team effort. What is each agency going to do to deal with this that is happening with the factory?

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thanks a lot. I think it is important to clarify again, the map presented here is a risk analysis map, where the long-term risks of various risks to public health are estimated. So...

**José Font:**

José Font. We have the source and this what is intended to illustrate, it is in the outer corner showing the risk that you mention here accepted by the agency of 100 in 1 million. That means that close to the source, those risks will be diminishing as you get farther away. That is what is intended to be illustrated here. That is all. It is a mathematical model.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

In terms of what each agency is doing, within the Federal Environmental Protection Agency there are several actions that we are taking. First, inform the communities surrounding these sterilization facilities in Puerto Rico about this risk. At the national level, the same is being done with the other facilities identified. A new regulation is being worked on to then be able to establish and move the various facilities to establish better emission controls of this pollutant to reduce emissions. Because, in short, what will address this risk and eliminate the risk in the long term is the reduction in emissions that reach the surrounding communities from the facility.

**José Cora:**

He indicated now that it was 99%, so what else? Where are we going to go? 100%?

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Specifically, that is part of another reason we are here. It is to let them know that a public comment period is coming at the end of the year where the agency will present a new regulation. Specifically, controls and control levels have not yet been established, they are being analyzed. They are going to be greater than 99%. One number that has been talked about is 99.99% control. But right now, that determination is being made across all of the United States to see what those controls are going to be and at the same time other additional measures that can be implemented in the facilities to be able to control and measure how the emissions are. I have a question here. Again name, last name and sector you represent.

**Bruny Vega:**

Good evening. My name is Bruny Vega, I am from here from La Margarita. I have several questions, but perhaps they are comments. He says that children are the most exposed. Here is the girl. I have grown up; I have been living here all my life. Forty years. The gentleman is very irresponsible to stand here without data saying it is not 12 hours nothing more. Well, that doubles the years to 140 years. Irresponsible, because if that is in the air 48 hours, every 12 hours we have emissions, because we are 24/7. The numbers do not

fail. Here two plus two is four. And it is super irresponsible for you to stand here and say "well no, because if we do it every 12 hours we are doubling, you are up to 140 years old. False. I do not know if there are any studies that say how accelerated it is in childhood versus adults. But obviously our entire childhood, my cousin, everyone who lives here, we have been exposed all this time. They are talking about a current regulation and a new regulation. From the current regulation, did Steri-Tech ever violate numbers? Because I see that they say 226 and in all other areas of Puerto Rico, a 78, and eighty-something. What is happening with Steri-Tech that we are at 226? When there are other companies that are also having these emissions, but I do not see other numbers as big in other areas of Puerto Rico, I see it in La Margarita. So that is my question. In the old regulation, was there any negligence? Was there no monitoring? Was there anyone verifying that what the gentleman says here is true? "No, we only do it 12 hours." I can stand here and say, "No, we do it four hours a day." Who guarantees that this information is correct? Is there a way the EPA is monitoring those phases and those schedules that they say they are releasing those emissions? I ask.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much for your extremely important comment. I know there are some technical questions and numbers we do not know. It is important to know, without a doubt, the risk analysis that the agency does, the Steri-Tech facility is number one in Puerto Rico in terms of risk and number one in the entire United States. Specifically, the other question was already more technical right now in terms of compliance with current regulations. We have carried out inspections at the facility. There are some aspects of the regulations that have been found to have alleged violations and a negotiation process is being worked on with the facility to address these violations. I do not know if there is anything else. We have several questions. Some people at the back. Please, gentleman.

**Víctor Carlo:**

Yes, my name is Víctor Carlo. I am the one who lives closest to emissions. Just behind, just behind. Margarita too. The two of us are the ones who live closest. No, I want to tell the participant who asked the question about when the emissions take place. I can tell you that they start at 3:00 in the morning. Between 3:00 and 4:00 in the morning and until 6:00 and sometimes until 7:00. Why do I know they start then? Because you hear blasts.

I thought it was noisy and that they did it at night, so that no one would measure it, the intensity of the noise. Because they wake me up. Now I think what they do not want emissions to be measured, that is all. Thanks a lot.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you, Víctor, for your comment. We have the colleague.

**Nora López:**

Thank you for the opportunity. Good evening. Nora López and I lived thirty-odd or 40-odd years here also in La Margarita. Not now, but I am still from here. And there are some things here that do not add up to me in any way, because each person is a world. And that they must wait 70 years, 30 years, no, I do not believe that. Three times I have had cancer, three times. And I am elderly. What saddens me most is my daughter-in-law, a young, productive woman, worked at Steri-Tech, lives in La Margarita, has two young children and has a cancer that is killing her. Ah! So how many of us here have suffered from cancer as well? Or how many do you know who have also died of cancer and suffered? Who cares about that? Because I hear a lot of technicalities, I hear a lot of promises. But who is interested in life? Who cares about the lives of the sick, of the cancer patients? There is my question. Thank you

**Carmen Guerrero:**

This comment is very important.

**Lourdes Ramos:**

Lourdes Ramos. Among the questions I raised, I asked if Steri-Tech had a public apology. At least an apology. An intention to right what is wrong, what they are going to do in this whole process and showing that at least they care about the community, since she says that an employee of theirs has that condition. To what extent are they taking care of their people and taking care of the neighbors? That we have always had them, that we respect them, because they provide employment. We understand that it is necessary for them to have work, but it is also necessary for them to take care of us. At least I believe there should be a public apology and genuine commitment, genuine interest and not waiting for

regulations. Because from 99 to 99.9 is nothing, it is a little thing like that and we still have the same problem. We need to extend it further. There must be a firm, clear, urgent commitment. Until it is actually done...Look, as José Rivera said. This is paperwork, this is legislation. I said I was not going to talk, but I have been there facing bureaucracies and I know how this thing moves and I know how politics moves. I therefore understand that this is urgent. Not when this is signed into law. I know that the mayor is committed to this community and to the people. I know that the legislature, which is based here, is committed and I expect Steri-Tech's commitment to the community. And I expect to see changes. Because as I told them, I am a victim of emissions and she knows me well and those who know me know my condition. So, I expect, at least, a public commitment from the company.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Important comment.

**Andrés Vivoni:**

My name is Andrés Vivoni, general manager of Steri-Tech and we are committed to making the necessary improvements before the law passes. To be very clear. We also operate with that gas. We are there day by day. The information is new to us when it came out. So, we are also committed to the health of the community and ours. And I am also a son who was also there since I was little and I also have children on the way and I am fully aware. We have been working with this gas for many years. We follow the laws, but we are committed to going further and controlling those emissions as much as possible. Let that be very clear today.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, Andrés. I have Miriam, I have here later...

**Miriam Santiago:**

Ok, here again. Many questions and many very important comments here in the community. Miriam Santiago. In one of the slides, they showed some company data. One question I had always had, I had not found the answer, and I looked it up on the page

was how much ethylene the company uses. Here they put 40 tons. I am not very good at math, but there is an app that converts to pounds. Do you know how many pounds equal 40 tons? 80,000 pounds. Ok? By stating 40 tons it minimizes the amount. 80000 pounds. The state of Illinois regulated companies to 150 pounds a year, which cannot be exceeded. Here we have 80,000 pounds a year. And that is a fact that comes from the company.

**Alex Rivera:**

The limit Illinois sets is based on what comes out of the stack. The 80,000-pound figure is gas use, not emissions.

**Miriam Santiago:**

Ok. And then how is the data converted to emissions?

**Alex Rivera:**

The 99% that we indicate, applies to the pounds that the facility uses and there you get the data of how much that is, converted into annual emissions in terms of pounds and tons.

**Miriam Santiago:**

Then we must do the calculation again to know exactly how we compare with other industries in the region. That information should be easily accessible to the community as well. That was one. One of the residents mentioned alternative methods and we had talked about it. The American Hospital Association in a 2019 Quality Advisory mentions four methods and options and then talks about the FDA - obviously we have talked here about the interaction, the interrelationship of the agencies and we talked about the FDA - the report says that they are doing an Innovation Workshop to determine the possible use of alternative methods and everything seems to fit into the framework that they identify as "possible incompatibility" with scenarios of impossible incompatibility. My question here is if you know of a more recent study – this was from 2019 – is there anything in process that is really reviewing the possibility of using those alternative methods? Because we know that ethylene oxide kills people and we have alternative methods that this same



report includes with the advantages and disadvantages. And there are some methods that are not harmful to the environment or to human health. So, if there is updated information from the studies that are being done about those alternative methods, that would eliminate the risk to the community, which is what we are looking for. It does not minimize it to 99.99. The other thing is that with the current regulation, which is 99, this does not include fugitive gases. Will the control of fugitive gases be included in the revised regulation? The company representatives, I had the opportunity to visit them and we talked and they showed me their operations. Certainly, the fugitive gas issue seems to me to be a serious matter. There is the stack but the open operation and the doors and the exhausts and everything exposes this community enormously. And that must be dealt with. They also told us about the permits and that they had received the permits and were objecting because the permits already required them to comply with 99.99 and they did not want to comply with that until the regulation was in place. That needs to be solved now. Because that new equipment must be put to work and they have to solve permitting that is what is stopping it, to at least mitigate, and we are looking for other options. Another question regarding the cumulative effects that exist between ethylene oxide and other pollutants. You know that we live in a highly polluted area. We are exposed to emissions from the stack of the AS, from the thermoelectric facility. How do all these other pollutants interact with ethylene oxide? We need to know. That compounds the issue. I imagine that adding up these additional pollutants puts us in a much more serious situation, facing this scenario. There has been some talk here about how the EPA must monitor the operation of the new equipment. I have been reading that State of Illinois regulation as well, they do inspections without prior notice, they do some monitoring. The regulation is cutting-edge and really shows seriousness, seriousness; the actions they are taking beyond communicating with the community. It demonstrates their seriousness in resolving the situation in favor of the residents. So, how is the EPA going to monitor and regulate the control of those fugitive emissions that are not in existing regulations? That is not currently part of the regulation. Again, we know that a regulation is coming and we were told it is going to take two or three years, we must do something immediately. We also talked about studies and everything. I want to emphasize; in this community we must do epidemiological studies to understand the true condition of the residents of this community. And finally, finally, on the EPA website, the EPA's mission, as it reads on its website, says, "The EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment." And my question is to the EPA members here this evening, do you think you are fulfilling your mission at the agency? You are regulating and enabling the continued use of ethylene

acid in this community. Do you believe that you are fulfilling your mission in our community? That is my question.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, Miriam. There are several questions. I also know that it will be 8:30 soon and we want to answer the various questions. I will go on with the comments that I was able to write down. Miriam, if anything remains. In terms of emissions data and ethylene oxide handling in the facility. Something we can commit to is to post that information on the Internet in a simplified way, using pounds and tons, to be able to compare that with the other facilities in Puerto Rico and in the United States. So once that is in place, we would be sharing that with you. As for the analysis that other federal agencies are doing on whether this is the only method that can be used to sterilize equipment. We know that another facility also used radiation, but as Alex explained very well, specifically for certain equipment to sterilize bacteria and viruses, ethylene oxide is the best option we have now. Even 50% of all medical products in the United States are sterilized using ethylene oxide gas. The FDA, as mentioned, is doing research to determine if there are other ways to sterilize without having to use ethylene oxide. That is still in development and once that advances, we would also be informing you. Yes, we wanted to ask you, I know you mentioned an analysis. We would like to have a copy of it so that we can also share it through the information we are posting for the community. In terms of the example, you are giving from Illinois and others, it is part of the information we are taking with us. Obviously here are the representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, who are also taking this information to see what other states, local jurisdictions, are doing to be able to address the issue of ethylene oxide, concerning the agency's regulations. I know you asked some specific questions, in addition to just controls, what else can the regulation consider, what we are working on now, and I wanted to allow Tomás if he could answer that question.

**Tomás Carbonell:**

Miriam, thank you very much for the questions and comments. I wanted to add a few things about the regulation that we are developing. Our goal with the new regulation is to reduce emissions and risks as much as possible. Necessarily, as part of the process of developing that regulation, we are looking at all those forms of emissions from these facilities, including unregulated emissions, such as fugitive emissions. And we are looking

at all the options that exist to reduce these emissions. So, I hope that sheds some light on the process we are following. The other thing I wanted to add, what we are doing here at the EPA, the information we are giving, the efforts we are making concerning the regulation, the work we are doing with the facilities to expedite action, to reduce emissions, we are doing everything we can to address these risks. Thank you.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you, Tomás. As for the epidemiological study, I wanted to let you know that here while talking for a moment with the mayor of the municipality, she has been in communication with the Department of Health and they have a commitment in collaboration with us to be able to carry out these studies. Soon we will be documenting and giving you more information, because obviously we will need the collaboration of all of you to be able to take the information to the whole community and collect this information. Victor provided some very important comments as to what the possibilities and risks are in the long term and at the same time the short-term risks that have been documented, for example, for the workers inside the facilities. So, all that information is taken into consideration and we would work on that methodology regarding what research would be like in collaboration with the community. So, you can count on the Municipality, the Department of Health, also Steri-Tech, and we know about various universities that have also contacted us with this information to be able to provide that help. The community has been working with several universities for many years. To be able to unite in a joint effort in order to meet that request and to be able to do that analysis. They count on that. So, I had her first, then let us go on with the questions in the back.

**Elsa Modesto:**

Good evening, everyone, my name is Elsa Modesto. I am the treasurer of the association here at La Margarita. First, I want to welcome you all. I want to respectfully add, that sometimes you must go to the facility to understand certain things about what is mentioned here about ethylene oxide. Last week I was with the president, Wanda, and Miriam. We visited the Steri-Tech facilities, thanks to Mr. Vivoni, who opened his doors to us. First, he explained to us using a screen as a visual aid, the entire procedure that is done there, the way it is carried out. We wanted to do it before this meeting. Then he took us to see the facilities and it is true that we saw that they have incurred a few million dollars buying equipment. We saw the equipment and he explained to us what the

equipment is going to do. There was a large monitor with many meters, which he explained to us that this system triggers a warning when there is an emission or something, that equipment warns them so they intervene. The last thing we saw was also the stack. There are four new chambers that they have there. They are waiting for permits. We are officially asking here that these permits be granted so that they can put this new equipment to work. We thank you for showing us. It is not the same to get an explanation only, Vivoni Jr. stood here and explained, the three of us observed those pieces of equipment and Miriam asked him many questions and Mr. Vivoni, Sr. explained. I also have a concern, that also the thermoelectric facility I have seen what these stacks release - because my house faces those facilities, in front of the thermoelectric. They say it does not smell. The gas does not smell, but I am worried that is where cars are taken every day and emissions are released, a car was burned once a little, when they went on to melt it, gasoline came out and exploded and there was a fire there. So, it is not just Steri-Tech that is causing the problem. I need you to also intervene with the thermoelectric facility, because I have seen the stack releasing gas. I have also seen the metal factory, when I went to Guayama to visit the schools, also all those metal emissions there. That must have chemicals there, those cars. These facilities must also be monitored. Because my house is right in front, and all those things coming from the thermoelectric facility and all, they come into my home, all those smells. The smell that sometimes wakes me up at 6:00 in the morning, it is possible that it is from the thermoelectric facility or those cars. I need you to, I express that concern officially today. Thank you and have a good evening.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you very much, Elsa. What Elsa is saying is also key. In other meetings we have had with the community they have talked to us about wanting to talk not only about the issue of ethylene oxide emissions, but also about the thermoelectric plant, AS, other facilities such as the metal recycling area and we have that commitment to hold another meeting to talk about the whole issue of collective air pollution, cumulative throughout this area. They did it in a meeting we had with Tata Santiago, Víctor Alvarado, and other entities. So we are committed and Lisa when she was at that meeting, we promise to have that meeting so we can address the broader issue of air pollution between Guayama and Salinas.

**Elsa Modesto:**

Yes, because there is something else. Elsa Modesto, I say it again. The other thing I noticed the other day coming from the mall, the fire academy has a stack, lots of smoke was coming out, a cloud of smoke so big. And where did that smoke go? To La Margarita development, to Villa Esperanza, Villa Cofresí, all this area and the Caserío Brisas del Mar. We also have that firefighter problem. I was going to take a picture of it, but like I said, they stopped burning and I could not take pictures. You know that when I was in Eide Bajo I took 4 files to them with photos. I was going to take a picture of it but they stopped burning and I was unable to take pictures of it. Thank you.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thanks to you, Elsa. I know there are some questions and now, please, if we can be brief with your comments because I think it is already 8:30pm, so that we can go ahead and close the meeting. And you know, again, this is one of several meetings we are going to continue to have, informing you about the progress, analysis, and the compliance work that we are doing.

**Nadya Rivera:**

Nadya Rivera. I have a suggestion for the next meeting. I think a representative from the CDC should be included. Because we have talked about the various diseases that this causes and obviously you concentrate on pollution, and I understand that, but we do have to talk about diseases as well. I wanted to mention that in the study, I have a specific question, when it comes to talking about taking residents into consideration, what is taken into account? Because for example, we are talking about the number being 40 to 60 years to develop cancer, right? What is the standard or the control, the model for this? Is it based on a healthy person? That is, we are talking about the fact that we already are aging, and everyone has their conditions, vulnerabilities, and risks. We are a population that has also gone through several natural disasters and health disasters and now several pandemics. There are many pandemics in the same historical moment. So, the risk is not normal, the risk is much higher, that is one thing. And we are also talking about the population at risk, children and obviously the elderly. You have also heard about the number of people. For example, you may want ask how many people have x or y type of cancer in these communities that are impacted? The other thing I wanted to leave last but not least, very quickly is that through information from the University of Chicago, Illinois, I did find how much EtO stays inside the body. "If you are exposed once, it takes 45 to 60

minutes for the body to break it down in half; a "half-life", and in the event of one exposure, the body eliminates it completely in 1 to 2 days. You can do the math. Then there is no one. Even we who came here, just having this conversation, being here for these many hours, we already have to go home and, in an hour, we are going to reach the amount of EtO, if we were exposed. And as they said, that cloud, that space of risk does not move. I mean, it is like, concentration gets stuck in the town where it is here. We then, the people who live in other towns, myself included, we are exposed momentarily and I will arrive home to process that within two days. We must take into consideration then, not only what is being released by Steri-Tech, but also that we must take into consideration how our body processes it. And bodies are not all equal either, for example, someone who is immuno-compromised, a child, or a person who has already had several cancers. Well, then it is not removed the same way. All of these things compound risks, one on top of the other. And I think those things should be included in the mathematical models to be done. Thank you

**José Font:**

Thank you for your comment. Yes, the risk we are talking about here this evening is specifically for ethylene oxide, inhalation, and it does not consider any other risk that the person may be exposed to. And there are sensitivities and vulnerabilities that are also not considered. It is a conservative analysis, but certainly, as you said, none of that is considered.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

I know we have, José.

**José Cora:**

José Cora. I saw that they talked about the 99% many times. What are the allowable emissions and where did 99% come from? And who completed those studies? So, they are emitting only one percent into the air. And who did that study? Which agency was responsible for doing that study?

**Carmen Guerrero:**

99% comes from federal regulation based on the Federal Clean Air Act to control specific ethylene oxide emissions. It is the standard that is set and is based on studies. This has been regulated for many years. With the new information that we document today we know that according to scientific data this pollutant is much more powerful and risky, therefore the regulations must be changed.

**José Cora:**

I am referring to emissions from them. Because they are based on the fact that they only release 1%. Who did the study to establish that they are actually releasing 1% into the air? Or if they did the study themselves? Because we cannot put the fox in charge of the hen-house. I mean, what was the agency that completed that study?

**José Font:**

Coincidentally, what we are proposing here this evening is to have greater control above 99%. The air is monitored, the air is monitored and the efficiencies of the equipment they use are measured. We set the standards. They monitor.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

We do inspections. As part of those inspections, we evaluate the information. In order to complete the risk analysis, we issue a letter of request for information. This is regulated at the federal level. If the company, whether Steri-Tech, or any other commercial sterilizer facility, issues fraudulent, erroneous information, they are subject to criminal action for submitting false information. So, the companies submit information containing the data. This is also compared to the volume of materials handled by the company and based on that, one can have quite accurate estimates about how much must have been emitted based on the volume of EtO that reaches the facility. So, this information is the most accurate information we collect that exists at the present time, based on data covering the period of 2021 to 2022 and from there the risk analysis was run.

**José Cora:**

And then the explanation follows, because they provide data based on what is happening now. Does the EPA or any agency actually visit to verify that the 99% goal is being met?

Because then the community must be sure that it is in compliance. That is, some agency must do an inspection to measure that they are complying with 99%.

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Ada will be adding additional information related to this question. Name and last name.

**Ada Ramona Miranda Alvarado:**

My name is Ada Ramona Miranda Alvarado, PIP municipal legislator. Here is an OSHA regulation, according to section 302-304, where it says: "Emergency planning is required based on, quantity, threshold, as well as the developing leak reports based on reportable quantities of extremely hazardous substances." See section 311-312 below. "The submission of product safety data sheets is required, as well as developing chemical inventory reports according to EPA hazard category identification. The categories of risks these products pose are as follows..." And there some things are mentioned. Here is the regulation. So, there is something that has not been covered here and there is something that has not been asked here, which is: Where is OSHA? Where is the regulation? Where are these inventories being kept? And we need to know those inventories to be clear. So, who can give me the answer about where those inventories are?

**Carmen Guerrero:**

Thank you, Ada. Specifically, to answer the question about OSHA, we have been in recent conversations with the agency, we wanted them to be here, but we gave them little advance notice. So, another commitment that we can work on is that in the next meetings they can be present. Specifically, they have also performed inspections at the facility. They have findings and it is important, therefore, that you are informed about them. So, there is the occupational safety item as well as the environmental compliance item, and we work through the agency's various air pollution regulations.

**Lourdes Ramos:**

Is there any access that the community may have to know about that information they are reporting, that inventory, all those things that have been mentioned? Because if all that is done, then there must be data. Because I know that there are times when you make an



action plan and I know people who change the date and issue the same one and change the date and issue the same one. We would like to know, with concrete data, if the same thing is not happening, where the same report submitted 20 years ago is reissued. Because that happens, there are unscrupulous people. Is there any access the community may have to verify that is real?

**Carmen Guerrero:**

We have data that we already have on the agency's website. We have been asked for additional information that we will also be uploading to the agency's website. We know that perhaps not everyone has access to the internet, so also in the next visits we can respond to those specific requests for information. We can leave a copy of that information with Wanda, so that it is here in the center providing access to it, not just through social networks and the internet. So, count on that to be able to share that data. I know it is already 8:45, we are truly grateful on behalf of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, the various agencies that are present here with us, the mayor, the City Legislature, our thanks to all of you for being with us all this time to clarify these doubts. We know that there are many questions, many concerns and we want to address them. I know you already want to leave. So, you may count on our commitment that this is one of many meetings that we are going to have with you to be able to keep you up to date on the changes and achieve those reductions in emissions, which is what we can achieve to ensure the health of all the population in the short and long term. So, thank you very much for your time, for your input and we will look at all the comments and recommendations and questions that have been mentioned. Thank you so much. Have a good evening.

*Work closes at 8:44pm*