

WASHINGTON – Following revelations that British Petroleum's (BP) oil refining facility in Whiting, Ind., has violated clean air standards for the last six years, U.S. Representatives Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) sent a letter to the U.S. EPA administrator requesting a comprehensive review of all BP pollution discharges in the Great Lakes basin. BP confirmed on Tuesday it exceeded Clean Air Act limits on the release of benzene, a dangerous toxin linked to leukemia and other serious medical conditions. Joining Congressmen Kirk and Quigley were 17 members representing communities throughout the Great Lakes region.

"Two years ago, we scored a major victory after BP agreed to back down from its plan to dump more ammonia and industrial sludge into Lake Michigan," Congressman Mark Kirk said. "This latest development further underscores the fact that BP cannot be trusted to meet federal clean air and water requirements. It is my hope that the EPA takes swift action to review all of BP's pollution permits to ensure there are no other violations that have gone unnoticed. No one argues against the need to expand production capability at the Whiting facility, but there should be zero tolerance for releasing deadly poisons into our air and water."

"It's easy to take for granted the air we breathe and the water we drink, but as we all know, these lifelines can become contaminated without careful oversight and dogged enforcement," said Congressman Mike Quigley. "Residents who live near our Great Lakes don't deserve to be subjected to environmental injustice, and I commend Administrator Jackson, the EPA, and the Obama administration for making this important issue a priority."

The letter and complete cosigner list is below.

June 4, 2009

Ms. Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

As Members of Congress representing the Great Lakes region, we are concerned about recent reports that British Petroleum (BP) has been violating clean air permits for as long as six years at its oil refining facility in Whiting, Indiana. We are therefore writing to request a comprehensive review of all ground, water and air pollution discharges at all British Petroleum refining facilities in the Great Lakes basin.

On June 2, 2009, BP reportedly acknowledged that it discharged benzene, linked to leukemia and other severe health problems, above federal pollution limits for at least the past six years. Levels of benzene emitted were approximately sixteen times the amount allowed in just the past

year.

In July, 2007, the company applied to dump 54 percent more ammonia and 35 percent more industrial sludge into Lake Michigan. Fortunately, a coalition of federal, state and local leaders, environmental advocates and local citizens prevented the first new permitted pollution of the Great Lakes in a decade. We now understand that BP began the overhaul of this plant, without the proper permits, and increased air pollution for over thirty months in the southern region of the Great Lakes.

As you know, the Great Lakes are the crown jewel of our nation. They provide drinking water, food, jobs and recreation for more than thirty million Americans. President Obama recently included \$475 million in his Fiscal Year 2010 budget in order to restore our lakes. As we begin the federal restoration of the Great Lakes, we should ensure that BP fully complies with the environmental protection laws and permits.

We request that the EPA undertake a comprehensive review of each pollution discharge at the BP facility in Whiting, Indiana and other BP facilities in the Great Lakes region. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continued environmental protection of the Great Lakes.

Sincerely,

Mark Kirk (R-IL)  
Mike Quigley (D-IL)  
Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)  
Mike Rogers (R-MI)  
Melissa L. Bean (D-IL)  
Brian Higgins (D-NY)  
Peter Roskam (R-IL)  
Thomas E. Petri (R-WI)  
Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)  
Bobby Rush (D-IL)  
Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL)  
Janice D. Schakowsky (D-IL)  
Bart Stupak (D-MI)  
Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI)  
Fred Upton (R-MI)  
Donald Manzullo (R-IL)  
Candice S. Miller (R-MI)  
Judy Biggert (R-IL)  
Deborah Halvorson (D-IL)