

**BOBBY L. RUSH**  
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**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Lori E. Lightfoot  
Mayor  
City of Chicago  
121 North LaSalle Street, Room 406  
Chicago, IL 60602-1248

Dear Mayor Lightfoot:

On behalf of the residents of the First Congressional District of Illinois and the South Side of Chicago, I write to convey my deep concern related to a recent construction permit submitted to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) by General III, LLC, a subsidiary of Reserve Management Group operated by General Iron Industries.

Residents of the South Side of Chicago are disproportionately exposed to harmful air pollutants, which scientific studies link to a variety of health problems including asthma, decreased lung function, and other respiratory symptoms.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I am alarmed by recent reports of the planned relocation of a General Iron Industries plant to the South Side of Chicago, especially as the community continues to endure the impacts of an ongoing respiratory illness pandemic.

General Iron Industries has a history of violating clean air regulations. In July 2018, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cited the company for multiple violations of the Clean Air Act after it failed to limit the release of hazardous metals in Chicago.<sup>2</sup> Most recently, the General Iron Industries metal shredding operation, which is currently located in Lincoln Park, was closed after two explosions.<sup>3</sup> In view of this, members of my community fear this permit will grant both the relocation of General Iron Industries and the sustainment of poor air quality within communities that do not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Particulate Matter (PM) Pollution: Health and Environmental Effects of Particulate Matter (PM) (<https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/health-and-environmental-effects-particulate-matter-pm>) (accessed Jul. 6, 2020); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Current Nonattainment Counties for All Criteria Pollutants (<https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/ancl.html>) (accessed Jul. 6, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Edwards Nam, Director, Air and Radiation Divisions, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, to Adam Labkon, General Iron Industries (Jul. 18, 2018) ([https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-07/documents/general\\_iron\\_industries\\_inc.\\_nov-fov.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-07/documents/general_iron_industries_inc._nov-fov.pdf)).

<sup>3</sup> *South Side lawmakers ask Pritzker to reject General Iron's move*, Chicago Sun-Times (June 24, 2020) (<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2020/6/24/21302019/south-side-lawmakers-ask-pritzker-to-reject-general-irons-move>).

On June 24, members of the Illinois General Assembly, who represent the South Side of Chicago, wrote the IEPA to call for the denial of General Iron Industries' construction permit. In response to this letter, IEPA stated that its grant of authority from the Illinois General Assembly does not permit its ability to deny permits for entities with a history of certain types of violations. In addition to this, IEPA states that the legal authority to zone or site a facility is at the determination of the City of Chicago.<sup>4</sup>

In the interest of the health and safety of my constituents and others within the South Side of Chicago community, I urge your full consideration of the potential negative impacts to our community prior to your decision and ask that you contact me concerning this authority.

Sincerely,



Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from John J. Kim, Director, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, to Illinois General Assembly Members: Senator Robert Peters, Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr., Representative Kambium Buckner, Representative Marcus C. Evans, Jr., Representatives Nicholas K. Smith, Representative Curtis J. Tarver, II (June 25, 2020).