Annex
air is clean and free of ethylene oxide.” He noted that cancer is the second leading cause of all U.S. deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

**Ethylene Oxide & Laredo**  
The EPA has classified EtO as one of the most hazardous air toxins that pose the greatest health threat in urban areas. In 2019, Midwest emitted more than 16,000 pounds of this toxin into the air, based on its self-reported data to the EPA, making Laredo the second leading EtO emitter in the country.

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**TOP EMITTERS OF ETHERYLE OXIDE IN THE U.S., VERSUS STERIGENICS’ CLOSED PLANT**

- Huntsman (Port Neches, TX)  
- **Midwest Sterilization (Laredo, TX)**  
- BASF (Geismar, LA)  
- Union Carbide (Seadrift, TX)  
- Union Carbide (Hahnville, LA)  
- Baxter (Mountain Home, AR)  
- Eastman Chemical (Longview, TX)  
- Shell (Geismar, LA)  
- Praxair (Bucks, PA)  
- Equistar (Bayport, TX)  
- Midwest Sterilization (Jackson, MO)  
- **Sterigenics (Willowbrook, IL)**  
  *Shutdown due to health concerns over ethylene oxide emissions.*

![](image)

*Based on self-reported 2019 emissions from the U.S. EPA’s Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), except for Sterigenics, which is based on 2016 TRI emissions (most recent available).*

Vanessa Perez, council member for District 7 which includes the Midwest facility and severely impacted neighborhoods and schools, said that Midwest’s ethylene oxide emissions are unacceptable and must come to an end.

“Our community has to be safe, especially for our children and future,” said Perez, who helped form the Coalition with a growing group of teachers, parents, scientists, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, attorneys, and other concerned citizens.

EPA data show that a majority of Laredo residents fall within the highest level of cancer risk in the country (top 95-100%) meaning that someone who lives in the red area on the map below has a higher cancer risk of developing cancer from air pollution than 95% of all other Americans.

A new investigative map, below, by ProPublica shows the extreme cancer risk for residents who live and work in Laredo, particularly in the northwest, north, and central parts of the city.

ProPublica’s two-year review of EPA data, shows that Midwest’s EtO emissions are estimated to increase cancer risk for people living within five miles of the facility by an average of 1 in 13,000, much higher than
the EPA’s threshold of 1-in-1 million as an “acceptable risk” which triggers federal regulations to notify polluters.

The risk is substantially greater the closer to the facility you live. At Muller ES, the risk increases to 1 in 3,700. For Midwest’s immediate neighbors (employees and business owners who work within the Killam Industrial Park), their risk increases to 1 in 560, a dramatic difference directly linked to EtO emissions.

“We believe that the EPA should begin air monitoring around the Midwest facility immediately to accurately measure EtO emissions here in Laredo,” said RGISC Board President Melissa R. Cigarroa. “Midwest should clean up its act. This company, which has been emitting EtO since 2005, says that it has invested in technology to reduce EtO emissions, but according to their own reporting, emissions continue. The dangerous risks of cancer remain too high for residents and our children.”

The Clean Air Laredo Coalition advocates for toxin-free air in Laredo, believing that industry can invest in existing technology to create a safe and healthy environment in which to live, work and breathe.