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WILLOWBROOK CELEBRATES NEW LAW RESTRICTING ETHYLENE OXIDE

*Strongest Restrictions in the Nation Against Cancer-Causing Emission
Likely Prevent Sterigenics from Re-Opening*

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Willowbrook, IL, June 24, 2019 - The Village of Willowbrook, along with surrounding communities and state legislators, is celebrating Senate Bill 1852, known as the Matt Haller Act, becoming law. This legislation becomes the strongest in the nation for setting restrictions related to ethylene oxide (EtO) emissions and for facilities that use EtO. This new law is a direct result of the health scare and concerns Willowbrook, and surrounding communities now live in as a result of EtO being reclassified, by the U.S. EPA, as a carcinogenic emission. Willowbrook based Sterigenics has been releasing EtO for the last 35 years.

The bill is named after Willowbrook resident Matt Haller who passed away, earlier this year, from stomach cancer. He lived about a mile from the Sterigenics facilities and was an outspoken critic of Sterigenics and its use of EtO.

“When you live through a crisis like we have been since August, you stop at nothing to gain a positive resolution for your community,” said Mayor Frank Trilla. “We are extremely proud to have worked closely with Rep. Jim Durkin, Sen. John Curran to see this law become a reality. We, as a Village, are not done and will not stop protecting our community from this danger.”

From the moment the Village learned of this crisis, it created a task force of experts who used top-level procedures to understand the risk and mitigate damages to the best of its ability. This effort included hiring independent ambient air testing experts. Village test results showed dangerously high levels of EtO which provided the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency with data to issue a Seal Order on February 15, 2019 shutting down Sterigenics.

The Matt Haller Act prohibits the use of EtO by any facility that has egregious violations requiring a Seal Order. In addition, it prevents new EtO medical sterilization facilities from opening within 10 miles of a school or park in counties with less than 50,000 residents and within 15 miles in counties with less than 50,000 residents. Also, the law requires public notice to schools, hospitals, and local government officials in the event of any elevated EtO emissions levels as well as ambient air testing at all EtO emitting facilities.

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