



“EPA’s commitment to environmental justice has not wavered. Under my leadership, we have embedded environmental justice into all our programs at Region 6, from permits to enforcement to grants.”

Dr. Earthea Nance
Region 6 Administrator

EPA’s Work In Laredo

EPA National Ethylene Oxide Rulemaking

In March 2024, EPA updated air toxics standards for ethylene oxide that will reduce lifetime cancer risks for people living near commercial sterilization facilities, including Midwest Sterilization. Through the installation of proven and achievable air pollution controls, commercial sterilizers will reduce emissions by more than 90%, making this the strongest measure in U.S. history to reduce emissions of EtO.

Laredo Residents Involved Upfront

EPA held a public meeting in Laredo in September 2022 where hundreds of residents came to learn more about emissions from Midwest Sterilization and the risks of EtO. Attendees also gave feedback to EPA staff on what should be considered to reduce EtO emissions from sterilizer facilities.

EtO Air Monitoring Project Launched in September 2023

In response to the Laredo community’s concerns about potential harm from EtO emissions, EPA Region 6 secured \$200,000 through the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights for a project to monitor EtO concentrations at several locations in the city from September 2023 to January 2024. EPA collected 146 air samples at monitoring sites close to Midwest Sterilization as well as one two miles away in order to gather EtO data from areas that are not near a known source of emissions. After a rigorous review process, the data was posted publicly on EPA’s website.

RGISC and LCAC Collaborate with EPA on Monitoring

Laredo community groups — the Laredo Clean Air Coalition and the Rio Grande International Study Center — secured funding for their own EtO monitoring project. EPA provided technical assistance during the development of the sampling plan.

Building Community Trust

Regional Administrator Dr. Earthea Nance and EPA headquarters leaders traveled to Laredo to meet with community leaders who have been working to address EtO emissions and residents who have been impacted by pollution. EPA leadership and staff continue to coordinate closely with local government and community groups, including the City of Laredo and Department of Public Health, city council members, Webb County, Laredo Unified School District, Laredo Clean Air Coalition, and the Rio Grande International Study Center.

