



February 27th, 2023

The Town Councilors of
Braintree, Massachusetts

Dear Town Councilors:

We write to you as members of Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, and physicians with expertise in public health and occupational medicine.

We previously wrote to Town Councilor Maglio on February 20th, calling for an immediate and comprehensive investigation of the public health and safety consequences of the February 16 explosion at the Clean Harbors facility in Braintree.

We have closely followed the information that has subsequently emerged about the event, and we are writing to highlight the following concerns:

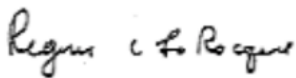
- The public has yet to be informed of the specific hazardous materials that were combusted and distributed in the air during the February 16 chemical fire. This indicates a failure of basic measures to track hazardous substances present at the Clean Harbors site.
- Multiple air quality monitors adjacent to the Clean Harbors site registered a large spike in particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) levels in association with the fire. These levels far exceeded the 24-hour standard permitted by the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter of air ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). We are not aware of any nearby air quality monitors that assessed levels of volatile organic compounds, which were certainly emitted during the fire. Such monitors should be installed in the Fore River Basin.
- The Clean Harbors facility fire demonstrates that the Fore River Basin must update its public safety response and evacuation plan to include the capacity to deal with a large explosion or chemical disaster in this densely populated residential area.

We again urge you to work with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to pursue a root-cause analysis of this explosion, to push for tighter regulatory oversight of the Clean Harbors facility, to monitor the health of those affected by this chemical explosion, and to develop a comprehensive evacuation and emergency response plan for residents of the Fore River Basin.

Sincerely,



Philip J. Landrigan, MD, MSc
Professor of Biology and Director, Program for Global Public Health & the Common Good
Boston College



Regina LaRocque, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Medicine
Harvard Medical School



Brita E. Lundberg, MD
Chair of the Board
Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility

