

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 12, 2012

The Honorable Rafael Moure-Eraso
Chairman, U.S. Chemical Safety Board
2175 K. Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20037-1809

Dear Chairman Moure-Eraso:

I am writing to request that the U.S. Chemical Safety Board initiate an investigation into the chemical explosion that occurred on October 9, 2012, at the U.S. Ink Factory in East Rutherford, NJ.

According to initial reports, the plant employees were working with chemicals used to produce newspaper ink when an explosion occurred and ignited a small fire inside the factory duct work. Seven employees were injured in this explosion, and some were severely burned and rushed to local hospitals.

These injuries are a stark reminder that millions of people live or work near high risk chemical facilities in New Jersey. It is imperative that an investigation is conducted into this explosion to ensure that these companies are operating with the highest safety standards.

Given the U.S. Chemical Safety Board's unique mission and expertise, I am requesting that your agency launch an investigation to determine the root cause of the explosion, assess the safety management systems that were in place at the time of the accident, and recommend any new safety procedures that could prevent a similar event in the future. In addition, the investigation should evaluate the potential threats posed to firefighters and other first responders who were at the scene. Throughout your investigation, I urge you to coordinate with all other relevant federal, state, and local agencies.

Working with chemicals should not carry an unreasonable risk of injury. When accidents like this occur, we have a responsibility to launch a thorough investigation, determine what occurred, and correct any practices that undermine safety at chemical facilities and in our communities. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

