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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

BETTINA POIRIER, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
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April 30, 2013

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

Dear Chairman Moure-Eraso,

As Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, with jurisdiction over the Chemical Safety Board (CSB), I am writing to express my deepest concern about the massive fire and explosion at the West, Texas facility on April 17, 2013. It is imperative that the CSB make every effort to ensure that a comprehensive investigation is completed into the causes of this disaster.

The devastating events at the West facility earlier this month have resulted in fifteen fatalities, hundreds of injuries, and damage to homes, businesses, and the adjacent rail line. By fully assessing the circumstances that led to this terrible event, we can help make sure that local, state, and federal chemical accident prevention and emergency response programs have the tools they need to prevent a tragedy like this from ever happening again.

As the lead federal agency charged with investigating chemical accidents at industrial facilities, the CSB will play a vital role in our understanding of the causes of this disaster.

I am asking for the following:

- (1) Please describe the CSB's plans to investigate the explosion at the West facility, including the scope and timelines of the investigation.
- (2) Please provide a list and description of all recommendations you have made in the past relating to reducing risks at facilities that handle highly explosive and toxic materials and whether they have been adopted by government or industry.
- (3) Please identify the recipients of these recommendations.

Please respond to these questions by May 16, 2013.

I greatly appreciate your attention to this request, as I plan to hold hearings on this issue in the near future.

If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Grant Cope or Tom Fox at 202-224-8832.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Boxer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works