

Testimony of Lara Compton
Lincoln Park resident, May 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am Lara Compton and I am an 10-year resident of Chicago's 43rd Ward, a member of Clean the North Branch, and most importantly a Mom.

As a current neighbor to General Iron - I implore you to not grant this serial polluter the opportunity to poison and endanger yet another Chicago community. In addition, I ask that you shut the current facility down until it can prove it is operating within complete compliance. On the northside, General Iron is not a good neighbor. It doesn't abide by the rules and regulations of the city, nor the EPA.

For at least 20 years, numerous residents have filed complaints, ranging from noxious smells and explosions to fluff littering streets, sidewalks and playgrounds. Hours of operations are not adhered to, workers walk our streets in gas masks picking up fugitive particulate matter and putting it into mislabeled, metal cannisters and a fine layer of dust can be seen on everything from cars, to windowsills to playground equipment. People have reported smells as far away as the 606 and Sedgewick L station and fluff as far away as the Lincoln Park Zoo.

But, you don't have to take my word for it, or my neighbors...

On March 12, 2020, as our city was making its initial plans to address the Covid-19 pandemic, a Chicago Department Of Public Health Environmental inspector responded to a citizen's complaint. Here's what this engineer had to say in Inspection Log # 11208389:

I could not fully inhale nor could I keep my eyes open at this location. When leaving the area after the inspection, I could feel my nose throbbing and chest discomfort.

In addition to public health inspectors, Senators Durbin and Duckworth have also sent you letters raising concerns.

As mentioned earlier, I am a Mom. I am a Mom trying to raise my 8-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son in the city I love. And, just like many families on the North and South sides of Chicago, I am struggling with that decision, because our city continues to empower and embolden known polluters rather than curb their behaviors and listen to the asks of advocate groups like Neighbors for Environmental Justice, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization and Clean the North Branch.

General Iron has proven time and time again that they cannot and will not adhere to the rules and regulations the EPA and the City of Chicago sets.

Why do you think this time will be different?