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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

February 16, 2023

Mike DeWine
Governor
Riffe Center
77 South High St 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine:

I write regarding the February 3, 2023, Norfolk Southern train derailment near the Ohio-Pennsylvania border in East Palestine, resulting in hazardous chemicals being released into the air, surface soils, and surface waters in and surrounding East Palestine. I would like to thank you for your leadership and the work of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) in responding swiftly to this crisis.

I am grateful no injuries or fatalities resulted directly from the derailment, but I remain concerned about the release of hazardous materials into the air, surface, and groundwater across the region surrounding the derailment and what the potential long-term health impacts will be. This is an unprecedented situation; hundreds of families were forced to flee their homes and are now rightfully concerned about the potential long-term health risks associated with exposure to the toxic chemicals released. The scope, scale, and significance of this man-made disaster will be impacting the people of East Palestine and the region for years to come. No American family should be forced to face the horror of fleeing their homes because hazardous materials have spilled or caught fire in their community. No American family should have to live in fear of long-term health risks from drinking contaminated water or living in contaminated homes.

A man-made disaster of this scale, scope, and significance necessitates a response and deployment of resources that are commensurate in scale and scope. I'm grateful for all that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio Emergency Management Agency, local fire fighters, and local law enforcement have done to respond to this unprecedented disaster, but it's critical we act quickly to supplement those efforts. Additional federal resources can and should play a critical role in helping our fellow Ohioans get back on their feet and ensure that their community is a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.

In order to ensure that the community has all the resources they need to ensure public health and safety now and into the future, I ask that you officially declare a disaster and seek the full support of the federal government to bolster the state of Ohio's ongoing clean-up efforts.

Once again, I appreciate your leadership, and I look forward to hearing your response and working together to address the concerns and needs of the residents of East Palestine and the surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

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

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator