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For Immediate Release



## **City of Covington Receives Preliminary Air Testing Results**

*Mayor and Council Call for BD to Temporarily Cease Sterilization Operations*

COVINGTON, Ga. (October 16, 2019) – City of Covington officials recently received preliminary air testing results from Montrose Air Quality Services (“Montrose”) and after reviewing the data, have called for the Becton Dickinson sterilization facility in Covington, Ga. to temporarily cease operations utilizing Ethylene Oxide until further emissions control equipment can be put in place.

Montrose tested the air over a seven day period for the presence of Ethylene Oxide, a chemical used by the BD facility for the sterilization of medical equipment. Ethylene Oxide is a known carcinogen. Montrose’s results indicated particularly high levels of the chemical in the Covington Mill and Settler’s Grove neighborhoods.

“We are grateful for BD’s presence in our city and realize the number of Covington residents that are employed at BD’s sterilization facility,” Covington Mayor Ronnie Johnston said. “However, given the results of our independent air test, the Covington City Council and I have no choice but to ask BD to do the right thing for their employees and neighbors and temporarily cease operations at their Covington sterilization facility until additional safeguards are in place and we have data verifying the efficiency of those safeguards.

“This is not a decision we took lightly, but when the safety of thousands of residents and BD employees is at risk, the only prudent action is to temporarily cease operations until we can be assured the safety of our community isn’t compromised.”

The Mayor and City Council sent a letter to BD officials requesting that they temporarily cease operations. Also, in an effort to gain support for the Covington community, letters were sent to state and federal environmental agency officials.

Montrose Environmental conducted tests at 11 locations from September 17 to September 23, 2019. Those locations included several test sites at the BD sterilization facility, locations in close proximity to the Covington Square, the Covington Mill and Settler’s Grove neighborhoods, south Covington and at the Covington Airport. To establish baseline readings in the area beyond Covington, testing also was undertaken at the Mount Pleasant area near Highway 11 in eastern Newton County, in rural southeastern Newton County, at a location in Conyers and a Georgia EPD facility in south DeKalb County.

The complete Montrose report documenting the monitoring results is being finalized and will be released shortly.

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