

Desiree Dantona
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SF 4316 Testimony
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Desiree Dantona. I'm a Minneapolis resident and I'm writing in support of SF 4316. I would love to be there in person to support this bill, but I just gave birth 3 weeks ago and am home recovering. My 4 ½ year old son, Milo, and soon my new baby girl attend Círculo de Amigos Child Care Center. This preschool in the East Phillips neighborhood has become very important to our family. It's a place where each staff member knows you and your child by name the moment you walk in the door. They say "¡buenos días mi amor!" to Milo and hold his hand as they walk him to his classroom. He feels loved and safe there and learns so much. So you can imagine my disappointment when I started smelling foul odors coming from Smith Foundry when dropping off my son in the mornings. I soon learned about all of the issues with air quality compliance and permitting the foundry has had over the years. After attending community meeting after community meeting, listening to the MPCA make excuses and present year-long new permitting plans that still don't address the community's concerns about our health - we are turning to you for help.

After months of attending Círculo, we noticed our son Milo was having a lot of respiratory distress when sick. Several times, simple colds sent us to the Emergency Room. He's now been diagnosed with Reactive Airway Disease, which is a precursor to asthma. Asthma runs rampant among the children growing up in East Phillips who are constantly exposed to the poor air quality that results from having industries like Smith Foundry and Bituminous Roadways as their neighbors.

A factory like Smith Foundry does not belong in a densely populated area, let alone across the street from a childcare center. Our state law should reflect this and empower communities to phase out these facilities that no longer conform to current zoning laws, especially when it is clear their presence is making people sick. Please help us keep our children out of the ER; make their backyards and their preschools a healthy and safe place to be; please vote in favor of SF 4316.

Thank you,
Desiree Dantona