



Innovative Recycling Solutions Since 1946

May 10, 2021

An Open Letter to the Tampa Bay Community

My name is Brian Leen and I am President and CEO of Gopher Resource. I joined the company in December of 2018 following a career over three decades in various industrial and manufacturing businesses. Early on, some of my most influential mentors instilled in me the importance of nurturing a business culture that is committed to a core set of values. Most important among those values is safety.

In all the businesses I have led, I have gotten to know employees personally. I enjoy getting to see their careers progress and watch their families grow, and I care deeply about their safety.

Recently, concerns have been raised and allegations made about Gopher Resource's safety practices. We take those concerns seriously. Gopher has a history of leadership and commitment in environmental, health and safety (EH&S) evidenced by the investments made and more importantly, the improvement in safety and environmental results. Since joining the company, we have furthered that commitment by increased investment in organizational capability and capital improvement in EH&S in Tampa.

Today, we are looking for opportunities to accelerate our progress and look forward to the feedback from ongoing regulatory inspections to help us prioritize our efforts. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration began their investigation in Tampa on April 5 and the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission began theirs on April 13. We support and are cooperating with their inspections and we look forward to their findings which we expect will help us prioritize our initiatives.

Immediately after joining Gopher, I focused on aligning the leadership team around the values that would define our culture. We identified "Protecting People and Communities" as our overriding core value. Shortly afterward, we increased our annual investment in safety by more than 50%. We hired five new full-time safety professionals who together brought additional experience and expertise to achieve world-class performance. Four out of the five positions are stationed in our Tampa plant.

Even before I came on board, Gopher had begun an ambitious \$230 million modernization program at the Tampa facility, with \$140 million dedicated to EH&S spending. Over 25% of our operating budget each year is dedicated to EH&S and every year we provide over 8,000 hours of training to our employees in Tampa, most of which is safety focused. In 2019, we introduced SafeStart, which is an industry-leading program meant to help people recognize hazards. We also implemented or upgraded various processes and programs to improve hygiene, management of change, and incident reporting. In that same year, we almost doubled the capital investment from the prior year in improvements focused on EH&S in Tampa and in 2020 we increased capital investments by another 60%.

What is most important to me is that these actions are having a positive impact for our employees and our community:

- We have achieved a 15-year sustained decline in the average lead level in employees, which is less than half of various regulatory and industrial standards and one of the most important measures of employee safety.
- Since 2012, air quality around Gopher has improved by 89%.
- In 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency strengthened its lead standard significantly. Gopher is 67% below that more stringent air quality limit.
- One of the largest projects in Tampa in 2020 was a \$2.8 million expansion of our stormwater pond which prevents storm water run-off from leaving the plant site.

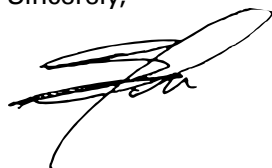
The job of recycling lead batteries isn't for everyone. It's a tough job. Breaking 40-pound lead batteries apart, neutralizing the acid, separating the plastic and then smelting and refining the lead is a difficult process. But the job is an important one for our community. Imagine what would happen to all the batteries in automobiles, trucks, golf carts and other recreational vehicles if they were not recycled. **Gopher's Tampa plant and its more than 300 employees prevent approximately 13 million batteries from being disposed of unsafely and exposed to the environment every year.** It is one of the greatest success stories of recycling and sustainability in the United States with a recycle rate of over 99%, which is higher than aluminum, plastic, steel or paper products. Gopher is also well positioned to help face an emerging environmental challenge by helping to develop a recycling solution for lithium-ion batteries (such as those that power electric cars and cordless household devices) which today are largely disposed of in landfills. Our team is committed to doing this important and challenging job safely and responsibly and the good work that they do for the community should be recognized.

Our resolve to continue our journey of continuous improvement in safety and environmental stewardship has been further strengthened in recent weeks, as has our sense of urgency. This year, we have plans for more training, more program enhancements and more capital spending focused on EH&S, some of which has already been implemented or is in progress. We are evaluating ways to accelerate our plans over the coming weeks and any feedback received from current regulatory inspections will help guide and prioritize our efforts.

Additionally, I have personally relocated from our corporate location to Tampa to make the achievement of our strategy for excellence my highest priority.

We remain committed to our overriding core value of "Protecting People and Communities" and look forward to continuing toward our vision of safety excellence and recapturing the confidence of our community of Tampa and Hillsborough County.

Sincerely,



Brian Leen
President and CEO