

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 28, 2026

Mr. Peter Dilnot
Chief Executive Officer
GKN Aerospace
The Colmore Building, 11th Floor
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham, B4 6AT
United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Dilnot:

Over the Memorial Day weekend, more than 50,000 Californians were forced to evacuate their homes due to the risk of a chemical explosion at a facility owned by GKN Aerospace. As a result of your company's operations, the residents of Garden Grove and surrounding communities have faced unacceptable risks to their safety and significant disruption to their lives. We demand answers around the circumstances that led to this catastrophic threat and the steps GKN Aerospace will take to prevent future risks to the community and the environment.

On May 21, 2026, first responders arrived at GKN Aerospace's industrial facility in Garden Grove to address an overheating tank of methyl methacrylate, a toxic and highly flammable chemical used in plastics production. In the following days, the Orange County Fire Authority worked to cool and neutralize the 34,000-gallon tank, which risked exploding or spilling thousands of gallons of the toxic chemical. Due to these severe risks, approximately 50,000 residents in a 9-square mile surrounding area were evacuated.¹

While more recent reports indicate that the threat of a massive explosion has abated, approximately 16,000 residents remained under evacuation orders as of May 25, 2026, and experts warned that there were still risks of a smaller explosion or spill.² Exposure to methyl methacrylate can cause significant irritation to the respiratory system, dizziness, and nausea—

¹ *Timeline: Orange County Chemical Tank Crisis*, KTLA 5 (May 24, 2026) (online at <https://ktla.com/news/orange-county/timeline-orange-county-chemical-tank-crisis>); *Officials Race to Cool Down Tank Containing Toxic Chemical as 50,000 Residents Remain Under Evacuation Order in California*, CNN (May 24, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/05/22/us/chemical-spill-orange-county-california).

² See *Chemical Tank "Spill Potential" Remains at California Plant*, GreenWire (May 26, 2026) (online at <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2026/05/26/chemical-tank-spill-potential-remains-at-california-plant-00935923>).

symptoms which have been reported by residents near the Garden Grove facility. The full scope of health impacts is not well understood but could include cardiovascular disorders and chronic respiratory illness.³

During the emergency response, GKN Aerospace personnel reportedly found that the tank's valves were blocked, preventing them from being used to neutralize the methyl methacrylate.⁴ The failure raises serious questions about GKN Aerospace's facility management and emergency preparedness. Furthermore, this near catastrophe follows previous instances of GKN Aerospace jeopardizing public health and the environment. In 2020, an air quality inspection determined that the facility had failed to properly document certain chemical emissions and operated equipment without a permit.⁵

To facilitate our investigation into the risk to the public resulting from GKN Aerospace's Garden Grove facility, we request the following information by June 11, 2026:

1. A detailed description of the sequence of events leading to the possible chemical explosion, including the specific time GKN Aerospace became aware of the risk and its response;
2. Documents related to GKN Aerospace's facility inspections, compliance history, maintenance logs, staffing levels, and emergency protocols;
3. A detailed description of the safeguards in place to prevent such a situation and whether GKN Aerospace was able to employ each during this incident;
4. A detailed description of the steps GKN Aerospace will take to prevent the risk of a future explosion or spill at the Garden Grove facility; and
5. A detailed description of the steps GKN Aerospace will take to ensure that communities surrounding the Garden Grove facility are appropriately informed of the risks posed by the facility.

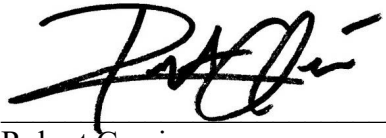
³ *Officials Race to Cool Down Tank Containing Toxic Chemical as 50,000 Residents Remain Under Evacuation Order in California*, CNN (May 24, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/05/22/us/chemical-spill-orange-county-california); *Chemical Tank "Spill Potential" Remains at California Plant*, GreenWire (May 26, 2026) (online at <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2026/05/26/chemical-tank-spill-potential-remains-at-california-plant-00935923>).

⁴ *What to Know About the Crisis at the California Chemical Plant*, New York Times (May 23, 2026) (online at www.nytimes.com/2026/05/23/us/garden-grove-chemical-plant-leak-evacuations.html).

⁵ *Officials Race to Cool Down Tank Containing Toxic Chemical as 50,000 Residents Remain Under Evacuation Order in California*, CNN (May 24, 2026) (online at www.cnn.com/2026/05/22/us/chemical-spill-orange-county-california).

Mr. Peter Dilnot
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Sincerely,

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Robert Garcia
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek T. Tran", written over a horizontal line.

Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman