



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL
COUNTY OF ORANGE**

400 WEST CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 202
SANTA ANA, CA 92701
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 1379
SANTA ANA, CA 92702-1379
(714) 834-3300
FAX: (714) 560-4552

Leon Page
County Counsel
(714) 834-3300

E-Mail: leon.page@coco.oc.gov

July 17, 2026

VIA FEDEX & E-MAIL

GKN Aerospace Transparency Systems, Inc.
Attn: CEO & Legal Department
12122 Western Avenue
Garden Grove, CA 92841
Email: info@gknngg.com

Re: Demand for Restitution of Emergency Response Costs

Dear Sir/Madam:

We are writing on behalf of the County of Orange ("County") to demand full reimbursement of public funds, resource deployment, and operational expenses incurred as a direct result of the hazardous material emergency at your Garden Grove facility beginning May 21, 2026.

Statement of Liability and Statutory Authority

On May 21, 2026, a catastrophic failure within GKN's 34,000-gallon chemical storage tank cooling system initiated an uncontrolled exothermic reaction of highly volatile methyl methacrylate ("MMA"). The imminent threat of a Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion ("BLEVE") necessitated a multi-day, multi-agency emergency intervention. This emergency required the mandatory evacuation of approximately 50,000 residents of Orange County and the scale of the incident prompted emergency declarations at both the state and federal level.

This incident was clearly not an unforeseeable accident as GKN has a well-documented history of regulatory violations at the site dating back over a decade. These violations include numerous Cal OSHA citations as well as violations of environmental regulations in which \$909,935 was paid by GKN to the South Coast Air Quality Management District ("AQMD") in a highly publicized settlement. The Orange County Health Care Agency, Environmental Health Division as the Certified Uniform Program Agency ("CUPA") has records of dozens of citations to GKN for violations for failure to comply with state hazardous materials and waste laws and regulations. Moreover, we are aware of at least thirty (30) lawsuits filed to date, including several Class Actions and believe that GKN is strictly liable for its negligence and resulting failure to protect the health and safety of the public. The incident required the County to mobilize numerous County departments to respond to this emergency and effectuate the evacuation, as well as expend significant resources to continue to provide vital public services to residents impacted by the evacuation, as a result of GKN's actions. See attached summary of the

County's Estimated Incident Costs.

The County is legally entitled to seek full restitution for public funds expended during the May 2026 hazardous materials crisis under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act ("CERCLA") (42 U.S.C. §§ 9601-9675) and the Hazardous Substance Account Act ("HSAA") (Health & Safety Code, §§ 78000-81050). The threatened release of MMA, a known hazardous substance stored at GKN's manufacturing facility in Garden Grove, caused the County to incur these necessary response costs which were taken to halt the immediate risk to public health and welfare, including but not limited to, the temporary evacuation of threatened individuals.

Likewise, under Section 53150 of the Government Code, "any person whose intentionally wrongful conduct proximately causes any incident resulting in an appropriate emergency response, is liable for the expense of an emergency response by a public agency to the incident."

Itemization of County Response Costs

While GKN has pledged generic community relief funds to local non-profit organizations, those corporate contributions do not absolve GKN of its strict financial liability to the taxpayers of Orange County.

The preliminary calculation of the County's recoverable costs is set forth in the Attachment to this letter and is currently over \$3.5 million. In addition to these costs, on June 23, 2026, the Board of Supervisors allocated an additional \$500,000 in First District discretionary funds to the City of Garden Grove to assist residents affected by the GKN Aerospace hazardous materials incident. But for this hazardous materials emergency, this allocation would not have been needed.

Demand for Settlement

The County demands immediate financial accountability to mitigate the impact caused to the County's public emergency resources. Specifically, the County demands that GKN Aerospace, or its primary liability insurance underwriters, issue a formal written acknowledgement of this demand within thirty (30) calendar days of this notice along with an intent to establish a structured reimbursement framework.

Formal Demand for Preservation of Evidence

This letter also serves as a formal demand and notice that you must immediately preserve and safeguard all records, materials, physical evidence and electronically stored information (ESI) that are potentially relevant to the chemical tank failure, toxic release, and subsequent mass

evacuation that originated at your Garden Grove facility on or about May 21, 2026.

Civil litigation regarding this matter has already commenced, and further legal actions are reasonably anticipated. You are hereby directed to immediately suspend all routine document retention, deletion, automated overwriting, recycling, or destruction policies as they apply to any materials connected to this facility and the incident.

SCOPE OF PRESERVATION

Without limiting the generality of this request, you are required to preserve all evidence created, modified, or received from January 1, 2024, through the present, including but not limited to:

1. Tank Maintenance and Inspection Records: All safety logs, structural reports, engineering assessments, internal repair records, and thickness testing data for the specific storage tank containing methyl methacrylate (MMA) involved in the crisis, as well as adjacent storage systems.
2. Sensor and Telemetry Data: All electronic data, temperature logs, pressure sensor readings, automated alerts, system override logs, and control room data feeds from May 1, 2026, through the conclusion of the hazmat response.
3. Internal Communications: All emails, text messages, voicemail messages, instant messages, and internal chats (including Slack, Microsoft Teams, or similar platforms) regarding tank stability, chemical overheating, emergency protocols, and the company's initial response, specifically involving plant managers, safety officers, and technicians.
4. Video and Audio Surveillance: All closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage, security camera footage, facility perimeter recordings, and internal audio or radio dispatch logs capturing the facility grounds from May 15, 2026 to the present.
5. Regulatory and Compliance Filings: All Risk Management Plans (RMP), Chemical Accident Prevention provisions, OSHA logs, communications with the EPA, and any recent filings regarding the facility's expansion permits.
6. Employee and Custodian Records: All training certificates, shift logs, schedules, and disciplinary or operational records for employees tasked with handling, monitoring, and storing toxic chemicals at the Garden Grove facility.

CONSEQUENCES OF SPOILATION

Please be advised that any alteration, deletion, overwriting, hiding, or destruction of the evidence described above—whether intentional or negligent—will constitute spoliation of evidence. Given the scale of the incident and the ongoing federal investigations, failure to comply with this notice may result in severe court-imposed evidentiary sanctions, monetary penalties, or an adverse jury instruction at trial.

GKN Aerospace Transparency Systems, Inc.
Demand for Restitution of Emergency Response Costs
July 17, 2026
Page 4

Please immediately distribute a copy of this litigation hold and preservation notice to all corporate officers, IT personnel, third-party contractors, and custodians who have possession, custody, or control of these materials. In addition, please confirm in writing within five (5) business days of receiving this letter that you have implemented this litigation hold and have taken the necessary steps to secure this data.

Please respond no later than **July 31, 2026**, regarding whether GKN is prepared to discuss a resolution of the County's claims for reimbursement of the costs it incurred as a direct result of the hazardous material emergency at GKN's Garden Grove facility. We await your prompt response.

Very truly yours,

By 
Leon J. Page, County Counsel

LJP:vl
Attachment



Garden Grove Hazmat Incident

Summary of Estimated Incident Costs

Impacted Departments	Estimated Incident Costs
County Executive Office	\$ 233,402
County Counsel	3,846
Health Care Agency	195,911
John Wayne Airport	1,763
OC Community Resources	162,280
OC Public Works	167,153
OC Sheriff's Department	2,710,669
OC Waste & Recycling	24,953
Registrar of Voters	13,762
Social Services Agency	57,566
Total Estimated Incident Costs	\$ 3,571,305