



December 11, 2023

The Honorable J. Luis Correa, Member of Congress
The Honorable Young Kim, Member of Congress
The Honorable Katie Porter, Member of Congress
The Honorable Michelle Steel, Member of Congress
The Honorable Mike Levin, Member of Congress

Subject: Urgent Action Required in Wake of Tustin Hangar Fire and Asbestos & Toxic Exposure Concerns

Dear Representatives Correa, Kim, Porter, Steel, and Levin,

We write to you collectively as the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) concerning the recent catastrophic fire at the former Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) hangar in Tustin, California.

This fire not only posed an immediate danger to your constituents and heroic first responders but also highlighted an ongoing public health threat: the continued use and presence of asbestos in our communities. In fact, during the Tustin hangar fire, firefighters faced immense danger from the immediate threats of intense flames, structural collapse, and prolonged exposure to toxic asbestos fibers released into the air. This exposure poses significant long-term health risks, including respiratory diseases and cancer, highlighting the need for enhanced protective measures and post-incident health monitoring for our brave first responders.

Several older structures across the country contain asbestos, a known carcinogen, which creates an increased risk to communities when tragedy strikes. But the danger doesn't stop there. The chlor-alkali industry imported over 300 metric tons of asbestos in 2022, a significant portion of which entered the country through the Port of Los Angeles. We know the threat of exposure exists along the entire chain of commerce when it comes to toxic chemicals, from the mine to the port to the production facilities that continue to rely on this carcinogenic chemical. The Tustin fire underscores the urgency and severity of this issue.

Given the well-documented health risks associated with asbestos exposure, including cancer and other serious diseases, we strongly urge you to join as a cosponsor of the bipartisan Alan Reinstein Ban Asbestos Now Act, which will put an end to the commercial importation and use of asbestos. This legislation is crucial in our fight to eliminate asbestos exposure and prevent asbestos-related diseases from continuing to cause illness and death in the United States. In the aftermath of the Tustin Hangar fire, there is deep concern about the potential spread of toxic debris, including asbestos, across Orange County. This situation demands a comprehensive response with regard to immediate disaster relief and addressing the broader public health implications.

We know the risks associated with asbestos are immediate and far-reaching. With fires and natural disasters becoming more frequent and more extreme, these risks to public health continue to rise. We need bold, decisive action to mitigate these risks and protect the health and well-being of our citizens.

We request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this critical issue in greater detail. Your leadership in Congress is pivotal in advancing policies that protect public health and ensure the safety of our communities from the dangers of asbestos.

We look forward to working together towards a safer, healthier future.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Linda Reinstein, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO)

Greg Russell, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)

Tammy Boyd, Vice President, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)