

THE GREEN BUILDING COMMUNITY SHOULD NOT PARTNER WITH KINGSPAN GROUP

We, the undersigned environmental, community organizations and activists, call on the green building community—including architects, specifiers, the US Green Building Council, and trade associations—to reconsider partnerships with Kingspan Group, a global manufacturer of building materials that markets its products as “green.”

1. **Kingspan is not an appropriate source for continuing education courses or sponsorships of events for the green building community, including those that touch on fire safety.** The revelations from the UK Government Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire show how the company misrepresented and mis-marketed its K15 insulation product’s fire safety over many years. This Inquiry is still ongoing, and Kingspan is a core participant. Read about Kingspan and the Inquiry [here](#).
2. **Kingspan has misrepresented its environmental clean-up efforts to CalEPA under the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding its Santa Ana facility.** Stormwater at this facility indirectly discharges into the San Diego Creek and Santa Ana Delhi Channel, an impaired watershed. Santa Ana is a majority people of color community, and the Kingspan factory directly abuts a residential neighborhood. Kingspan workers filed a whistleblower complaint to CalEPA, and you can read the full whistleblower complaint and view the documentation by them [here](#).
3. **In October 2021, Kingspan’s Santa Ana factory workers documented unhealthy levels of indoor air pollution and other unsafe working conditions.** You can read the workers’ full [complaint to CalOSHA here](#). You can read Dr. Shahir Masri’s [air monitoring study of the facility here](#).

See the FAQ below for a more detailed summary of these issues, in addition to the links above.

Without factory workers blowing the whistle, and without the UK Government’s Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry, the public would not know how Kingspan’s actions conflict with their green image. We call on those who deal with Kingspan to reconsider rewarding it for behavior that weakens the credibility of the green building community, and that goes against the values of safe and sustainable buildings and communities. Trade groups should not offer continuing education courses taught by Kingspan and should not have Kingspan sponsor or speak at trade shows and conferences until the Inquiry is finished and changes are made to its Santa Ana factory.



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Organizational Signers

350 Hawaii
Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action
Bay Area - System Change not Climate Change
Businesses for a Livable Climate
Call to Action Colorado
CatholicNetwork US
Climate Action Campaign
Climate Advocacy Lab
Climate Justice Alliance
CO Businesses for a Livable Climate
Community for Sustainable Energy
Earth Action, Inc.
FrackBustersNY
Friends of the Earth US
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
Greenpeace USA
I-70 Citizens Advisory Group
Indivisible Ambassadors
Labor Network for Sustainability
Littleton Business Alliance
Madison Park Neighborhood Assoc- GREEN
Mayfair Park Neighborhood Association Board
Mental Health & Inclusion Ministries
MLC Climate Justice Wing
Montbello Neighborhood Improvement Association
North Range Concerned Citizens
OC Habitats
Orange County Environmental Justice
RapidShift Network
Save EPA (former employees)
Small Business Alliance
Southwest Organization for Sustainability
Stand.earth
Sunflower Alliance
Sunrise Movement
System Change Not Climate Change
Texas Campaign for the Environment
The Green House Connection Center
The River Project
UCI EcoGovernance Lab
Unite North Metro Denver
Wall of Women
Western Slope Businesses for a Livable Climate
Womxn from the Mountain
Working for Racial Equity

Kingspan FAQ

- 1. Kingspan is not an appropriate source for continuing education courses or sponsorships of events for the green building community, including those that touch on fire safety.** Despite internal warnings and outside concerns as early as 2008, Kingspan did nothing to address fire testing, certification and mismarketing issues on its Kooltherm K15 insulation. K15 was one of the products used in the Grenfell Tower, which burned in 2017 killing 72 people, largely because of the insulation and cladding. Kingspan says it played no role in the design of the cladding system on Grenfell Tower and that only 5% of the insulation in the tower was K15. According to testimony and internal documents published in an ongoing UK government inquiry into the fire, Kingspan continued to use a 2005 large scale fire test to market K15 until 2020, even though Kingspan had introduced a new, more flammable, version of K15 in 2006. The Inquiry also revealed in 2019 that Kingspan kept secret four 2007-2008 fire tests involving this new version of K15 that had failed to meet the standard necessary to pass the test. By early 2008, Kingspan managers and executives were aware of the “bad fire performance,” fire test issues, and inappropriate marketing of the insulation, and they understood that the product risked not passing the appropriate fire tests for which Kingspan was actively marketing it. Kingspan relied on misleading safety certificates for K15 starting in 2009, for example certificates that stated that “K15 can be considered a material of limited combustibility” when Kingspan clearly understood it was a combustible insulation. According to the public record, no one at Kingspan involved in the scandal has been disciplined, demoted, or fired regarding these issues.
- 2. Kingspan has misrepresented its environmental clean-up efforts reported to CalEPA.** The company’s own records show that it has exceeded allowable discharge levels for zinc in stormwater runoff by almost 7 times in 2020-2021, over 13 times in 2019-2020, and 10 times in 2018-19. The company was sued for failing to implement adequate best management practices and entered a consent decree with the OC Coastkeeper’s in 2021. To address this pollution, Kingspan reported to CalEPA additional actions being taking to comply with the Clean Water Act. However, workers in Kingspan’s Santa Ana, CA factory recently filed a whistleblower complaint alleging management has misrepresented these efforts. For example, despite reporting the daily use of an outdoor industrial vacuum to capture pollutants beginning in December 2020, the company left the vacuum sitting idle and instead instructed workers to blow dust and debris with a leaf blower every day. Workers also allege the company failed to disclose industrial chemicals in use containing high levels of zinc and have failed to train the workforce in best management practices as reported in filings.
- 3. Kingspan’s Santa Ana factory workers documented unhealthy levels of indoor air pollution.** Despite workers demanding a safe workplace and filing an OSHA complaint in October 2021, Kingspan has not made improvements to factory ventilation or properly fitted workers with masks according to OSHA standards. Workers in the skylight factory weld galvanized steel, spray and bake fiberglass domes, apply galvanized spray paint and other chemicals. They have complained about air quality to management several times, but nothing changed. In August 2021 they took matters into their own hands and partnered with local environmental justice activists at Madison Park Neighborhood Association and Dr. Shahir Masri, a pollution scientist at UC Irvine, and measured particulate matter inside the factory for three days. Dr. Masri’s analysis found that the average PM 2.5 concentration inside the Kingspan facility was six to seven-times higher than outdoors (as compared to smoke in recent wildfire episodes, which often results in a 2- to 4-fold increase in PM 2.5). Of eight employees who carried air monitors, five recorded average PM 2.5 concentrations that, if measured outdoors, would rank between “unhealthy” and “very unhealthy” according to EPA’s Air Quality Index. Some measurements reached the maximum limit of the monitor’s detection ability.