



## District 9

**Daniel Flippo**  
District Director

**Mark Cochran**  
Assistant to the Director

**Wesley Thompson**  
Sub-District Director

January 28, 2021

Stephen Adams  
Executive Director  
Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority  
439 Mulberry St.  
Macon, Georgia 31201

Dear Mr. Adams,

We write to you on behalf of the more than 300 workers at the Kumho Tire USA plant to bring your attention to the ongoing and serious outbreak of COVID-19 at the plant, which continues to go unaddressed despite our repeated pleas for help. As the landlord of record for the property, we are asking the Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority (the "Authority"), to exercise its authority and intervene to protect the workers at the plant as well as the community members they interact with when they go home to their families.

We bring this to your attention because there is currently another alarming COVID outbreak at Kumho Tire. Workers have reported at least 12 positive cases and that one worker has actually died. We have submitted the attached request for information and demand to meet with Kumho management to address our concerns, but as of this date we have yet to hear from them.

As mentioned above, this is not the first time we have raised these concerns. In fact, on March 20<sup>th</sup> and again on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, we requested a meeting with Kumho management on behalf of workers at the plant. After receiving no response, workers filed a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA") in May 2020, which led to a Certificate of Posting OSHA Notification of Potential Hazard on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, workers continued to contract the virus, so on behalf of workers at Kumho, we raised these concerns at the June 15<sup>th</sup> Bibb County Board of Health. Then on July 20<sup>th</sup>, Kumho workers reported to the Board of Health that more than 30 of their co-workers contracted COVID and that the plant still lacked enough hand sanitizer, PPE, and requirements to maintain social distancing. Management even admitted in [Tire Business News](#) on July 23, 2020 that at least 6 employees, 7 contracted employees, and one temporary worker had tested positive for the virus. Additionally, we notified the Governor's Office as well as the Sheriff's department during this time. So now, after more

than nine months of employees jeopardizing their lives and the lives of their families at Kumho we are now asking you to intervene.

Kumho management's indifference is not surprising considering that Kumho Tire is in the "Severe Violator Enforcement Program" with OSHA - the only tire company in the country with such a designation. They earned this designation as a result of multiple tragic accidents, including incidents resulting in hospitalizations, and the company's failure to remedy safety conditions.

But considering that residents of Macon-Bibb gave Kumho tens of millions of dollars in tax abatements, the very least Kumho can do is ensure that its taxpayer subsidized-factory is not harming its workers and the communities they go home to at night. In fact, Kumho agreed to keep the "Project in a safe condition and to repair and maintain the Project in accordance with standard practice in its industry," when it signed its Rental Agreement (see Section 6.8). Further in its Deed to Secure Debt it committed to "maintain the property in good safe and tenantable condition...", and that it shall not cause "any act or omission that would materially increase the risk of fire or other hazard.... or suffer and permit the conduct of any nuisance..." (see Section 1.07). Arguably, Kumho's repeated failure to protect workers from COVID spread at the plant and the community-at-large appears to violate these agreements.

We urgently request a meeting to share our concerns with the Authority and identify solutions to protect Kumho workers and the community in which we all live. We stand ready to meet at your earliest convenience. Please contact me at (478)718-9274 to set up an appointment.

Concerned,

Alex Perkins,  
Staff Representative  
United Steelworkers, District 9

cc: Macon Bibb County Industrial Authority Board of Directors,  
Macon-Bibb County Board of Commission,  
Mayor Lester Miller.