



MANTENO COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

June 3, 2026

Village of Manteno
Attn: Village President, Board of Trustees, and Village Administrator
98 East Third Street
Manteno, Illinois 60950

Re: Gotion Fire Protection, Emergency Response Planning, and Fire Brigade Discussions

Dear Village Officials:

On behalf of the Manteno Community Fire Protection District Board of Trustees, I am writing to express the Board's growing concern regarding the ongoing discussions surrounding fire protection, emergency response planning, and the proposed Fire Protection & Life Safety Compliance Agreement associated with the Gotion Illinois battery manufacturing facility.

From the beginning of this project, the Fire District has supported responsible economic development and the opportunities this facility may provide to our community. However, throughout the planning, review, and development process, the Fire District has consistently maintained that any development of this magnitude and hazard profile must not create a significant operational burden on the Fire District, our taxpayers, neighboring fire departments, or the regional MABAS mutual aid system.

During the initial tax abatement and development discussions involving Gotion representatives, Village officials, planners, engineers, and other stakeholders, the Fire District communicated that the Fire District was already operating at or near its available capacity and could not absorb significant additional emergency response demands generated by the facility. It was our understanding that this concern was recognized and that the project would be designed and operated in a manner that minimize operational impacts on the public fire service.

Throughout these discussions, several key fire and life safety expectations were consistently communicated by the Fire District:

- Adoption and implementation of the 2024 International Fire Code, International Building Code, and associated standards despite the then-current adoption of the 2018 code cycle;



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- Utilization of the highest practical level of engineering and administrative controls, including fire protection systems, ventilation systems, hazardous materials controls, monitoring systems, emergency planning, and employee training;
- Establishment of a meaningful onsite fire brigade, industrial emergency response team, or comparable internal emergency response capability capable of addressing routine and intermediate incidents before escalation;
- Provision of onsite occupational health or medically trained personnel capable of addressing routine workplace injuries and illnesses without creating unnecessary EMS demand on the Fire District;
- Prohibition of destructive testing, battery destruction operations, battery refurbishment operations, or similar higher-risk processes within the primary manufacturing facility unless separately reviewed and approved; and
- Ongoing collaboration with the Fire District regarding emergency planning, pre-incident planning, facility modifications, operational changes, and future expansion phases.

The Fire District did not develop these expectations in opposition to the project. Rather, they were based upon extensive due diligence, including consultation with fire officials from other jurisdictions, review of battery manufacturing incidents throughout the United States, site visits to operational facilities, review of applicable codes and standards, and extensive research into lithium-ion battery hazards and emergency response considerations.

Over the past several years, the Fire District has worked in good faith to develop solutions rather than obstacles. Recognizing concerns expressed regarding the cost and structure of a traditional industrial fire brigade, the Fire District has explored and discussed multiple alternatives, including phased implementation, hybrid emergency response models, enhanced industrial emergency response teams, joint training initiatives, and other approaches intended to balance safety objectives with operational realities.

Unfortunately, many of these alternatives have been rejected as too costly or impractical. More recently, discussions have increasingly focused on replacing meaningful onsite emergency response capability with financial contributions to the Fire District. While financial assistance can help support preparedness, training, staffing, and equipment needs, it does not replace the immediate intervention capabilities that onsite personnel can provide during the critical early stages of an incident, nor does it eliminate the operational, liability, responder safety, environmental, and mutual aid concerns associated with large-scale battery manufacturing operations.



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The Fire District is also concerned by portions of the ongoing document review and negotiation process. Throughout multiple iterations of proposed agreements, plans, analyses, and operational documents, the Fire District has observed proposed revisions that remove, modify, or substantially weaken provisions that the Fire District believes are based upon applicable laws, regulations, adopted codes, recognized standards, accepted fire protection practices, and recommendations developed through years of project review.

While parties may reasonably disagree regarding interpretation and implementation of certain provisions, the Fire District's concern is that some proposed revisions reduce fire and life safety protections that were originally contemplated during project planning, code review, hazard analysis, and emergency response discussions. In several instances, provisions relating to onsite emergency response capability, hazard mitigation, incident reporting, staffing expectations, operational safeguards, inspection authority, and future hazard review have been reduced or removed during negotiations.

The Fire District has consistently maintained that fire and life safety requirements should be driven by the hazards present, applicable codes and standards, sound engineering principles, responder safety considerations, and long-term community protection—not solely by project cost or operational convenience. We remain concerned that continued efforts to weaken or eliminate these provisions ultimately shift additional operational risk and responsibility to the public fire service, local taxpayers, and the regional mutual aid system.

We are also troubled by recent references to potential litigation should the Fire District decline to support the currently proposed agreement. The Fire District has participated in these discussions in good faith from the beginning and has consistently sought solutions that balance economic development with public safety responsibilities. We do not believe that the threat of litigation promotes productive collaboration or helps resolve the legitimate operational and safety concerns that have been raised throughout this process.

We remain willing to continue discussions and work collaboratively toward a practical and sustainable solution. However, any final agreement must adequately address operational impacts, emergency response requirements, firefighter safety concerns, mutual aid implications, environmental considerations, and the long-term risks associated with this facility. It must also remain consistent with applicable laws, regulations, adopted codes, recognized standards, and the fire and life safety objectives that have guided this project since its inception.

The Manteno Community Fire Protection District Board of Trustees respectfully requests that the Village of Manteno continue to work collaboratively with the Fire District to ensure that any final resolution appropriately balances economic development with the long-term safety, protection, and operational sustainability of our community.



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Thank you for your consideration and continued partnership.

Respectfully,

MANTENO COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

William "Bill" Perkins
Trustee President