

May 4, 2020

Vice President Mike Pence
Chair, White House Coronavirus Task Force
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President,

The consumer products value chain, specifically the food and household cleaning supply chain, is working tirelessly to keep retail shelves and the kitchens of hospitals, nursing homes and other care facilities fully stocked for the American consumer. Up to this time, while there have been localized challenges, the value chain has been largely successful despite the unprecedented challenges faced daily that are pushing resources to the limits. The food, beverage, personal care and household product manufacturers and related warehouse, distribution and retail partners are working hard to maintain an adequate supply of trusted products for all consumers who want and need them during the COVID-19 national public health emergency. The industries listed here represent sectors that are extremely important segments of our nation's critical infrastructure as recognized by Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (DHS-CISA) [Guidance for Tier 1 Type of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers](#). While the farm to fork food system supply chain supports continued priority testing of healthcare providers and first responders, as testing capabilities continue to expand, both the Food and Agriculture and Chemical Sectors respectfully request prioritized access to testing by our member companies for their associates.

In March, the food and agriculture, consumer packaged goods (CPG) and retail industries respectfully requested that- as testing capabilities expand - the food and agriculture, CPG manufacturing and retail operations have prioritized access to testing in those situations where it helps protect workers. The current inconsistencies in testing approaches from state to state and between localities have resulted in the need to downscale or shut down operations altogether. While the industry has developed guidance for companies to continue production and sales operations in the event an employee tests positive, this concern is no longer a hypothetical. This is happening, putting our stressed food supply in greater jeopardy.

Since our initial request, the number of food operations that have closed due to illness within their worker communities has increased, and at the same time, testing has become more accessible. Now more than ever, it is critical to keep the Food and Agriculture sector, CPG and retail industries operations functional to feed American families. We again urge you to prioritize the testing resources for our sectors directly behind healthcare and first responders.

Priority access to COVID-19 testing is critical for the following reasons:

- Testing is the first defense to ensure that essential workers are healthy and continue to work. Accordingly, it is imperative that essential workers in the critical infrastructure sector have access to priority COVID-19 testing.

- Testing is a critical mitigation for asymptomatic workers in farms and facilities that have documented cases of illness and assurance to those who are cleared via testing to continue to work. We now know that this virus spreads before individuals show symptoms. If essential workers that are asymptomatic carriers for the COVID-19 virus are not identified through testing - particularly in communities with active transmissions - they may unknowingly infect those in their communities, including their fellow employees. Given the scarcity of PPE and fragility of the supply chain, identifying these workers is critical to managing transmission.

Again, thank you for your leadership through the COVID-19 public health emergency. The partnership between government and private industry through this crisis has been extraordinary. The Food and Agriculture Sector - encompassing the entire food system supply chain - from farm to retail - supports continued priority testing of healthcare providers and first responders and respectfully requests that you prioritize employees of the food and agricultural as well as chemical sectors when situations warranting voluntary testing arise. This critical function during this crisis helps assure that the products consumers want and need will be produced and available to them when they shop to feed their families.

Sincerely,



American Bakers Association



CONSUMER BRANDS ASSOCIATION



CRA
CORN REFINERS ASSOCIATION



FMI
THE FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



GLOBAL COLD CHAIN ALLIANCE



IDFA
International Dairy Foods Association



IFDA
international foodservice distributors association



NATIONAL FISHERIES INSTITUTE



National Confectioners Association



NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION



NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION



PTNPA



Snacking • Nutrition • Convenience
SNAC
INTERNATIONAL



UNITED FRESH
PRODUCE ASSOCIATION

- cc: Dr. Deborah Birx, Response Coordinator, White House Coronavirus Task Force
 The Honorable Chad F. Wolf, Acting Secretary, US Department of Homeland Security
 The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary, US Department of Health and Human Services
 The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary, US Department of Agriculture
 The Honorable Stephen Hahn, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
 The Honorable Frank Yiannas, FDA Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response
 The Honorable Robert Redfield, MD, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

