

April 3, 2020

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We appreciate the bold steps Congress has taken thus far to respond to the novel coronavirus and urge you to target future aid to the dedicated and talented men and women on the front lines of this epidemic.

The essential critical industries working to care for, feed, and protect Americans, in addition to performing countless other jobs fundamental to the continuity of the nation's necessary functions, are selflessly serving the nation during this time of crisis. Workers in these critical industries are serving even as they face challenges including lack of childcare, transportation, health concerns and exhaustion. On March 16th, President Donald Trump issued updated Coronavirus Guidance for America stating, *"If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule."* Workers in these industries are taking this "special responsibility" seriously, ensuring public health and safety, the economy, and national security functions in the United States stay open for business. It is for good reason that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that Americans stay home. For those laboring in these vital industries, this precaution is not an option as they are part of the essential workforce. Further, our essential workers who cannot telecommute are not allowed to care for their families at home and are forced to make arrangements for children who are no longer able to attend our schools or daycare centers.

Essential critical infrastructure workers are fighting a war against the coronavirus at great personal cost, and these workers should be recognized and supported by the federal government. Whether by exempting these essential critical infrastructure workers from federal taxes and requiring immediate adjustments to their tax withholdings, or by providing direct payments, the federal government should stand by these workers as they serve as the nation's lifeline during this difficult time.

As Congress considers its next coronavirus response package, we urge you to include support for America's essential critical industry workers. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact Dave Carlin (dcarlin@idfa.org) for further information.

Sincerely,

American Bakers Association
American Frozen Food Institute
Consumer Brands Association
FMI – The Food Industry Association
Global Cold Chain Alliance
International Dairy Foods Association
International Foodservice Distributors Association
National Association of Truckstop Operators
National Automatic Merchandising Association
National Chicken Council
National Grocers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Restaurant Association
North American Millers' Association
Peanut and Tree Nut Processors Association
SNAC International
United Fresh Produce Association