

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

We write to express support for policies that enable our agriculture community to assist with supply chain challenges of this and future pandemics. We have witnessed, firsthand, our once-resilient supply chain come under immense pressure in terms of demand and viability. Always on the cusp of new technological advancements resulting in greater yields and abundance for consumers, the agriculture community is well-positioned to partner with lawmakers to develop reforms and find new solutions to the challenges facing our nation as a result of COVID-19.

The U.S. has relied heavily on other nations, especially China, for hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment (PPE). Because of COVID-19, the global supply chain was hindered, and U.S. manufacturers have been unable to keep up. Early reports indicated that, as China unleashed COVID-19 on themselves and the world, they ceased producing many goods, including PPE. They simultaneously acquired significant amounts of PPE from other nations, as retail availability in the U.S. became non-existent and the Strategic National Stockpile was depleted. Now China is attempting to appear as the hero, engaging in what has been termed “mask diplomacy,” by offering PPE to U.S. communities.

Two sectors of the agriculture community are eager to help expand domestic production of these critical resources to ensure we are not reliant on other nations. The ethanol industry has the capability to put their product in the pipeline for hand sanitizer production, but only by modifying their facilities to further purify the ethanol to meet the requirements set forth by the Food and Drug Administration. Similarly, the cotton industry can lend their product to PPE and other medical supply production, but not without modifications to manufacturing facilities.

While these sectors in the agriculture community want to participate in helping Americans through crises, the heavy capital investment to revamp entire manufacturing facilities and industry supply chains is a hindrance. We support the Administration's position to allow companies to expense at 100 percent any necessary modifications to on-shore production or to facilitate production of items needed during a pandemic and afterward, if the demand for those items has significantly increased.

We also support removal or improvement of regulations impeding domestic manufacturing and better coordination from relevant agencies. For example, long-term federal contracting with these industries is necessary to help build robust supply chains in the United States. Many companies want to invest in the U.S. to build out supply chains – but without long-term Federal contracting that investment will not be realized. Additionally, the Berry Amendment

_____/s/_____
Kelly Armstrong
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Troy Balderson
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Jeff Duncan
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William Timmons
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Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

_____/s/_____
Rick W. Allen
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