

## **Open Letter to President Joe Biden Regarding 5 Immediate Supply Chain Solutions**

We, the undersigned coalition of associations, representing agriculture, foodservice, trucking, warehousing, manufacturing, retail, construction, energy, and other key supply chain stakeholders, call on the Biden Administration to work with our industries to address the immense challenges impacting our nation's supply chain.

While we represent different industries, we share the common burden of current supply chain disruptions, which are driving up prices and leading to a growing shortage of goods in the United States, with the holidays just around the corner.

As business leaders and proud Americans, we are firmly committed to this country's economic recovery. We are working to usher in a return to normalcy and striving to help all Americans enjoy a better way of life by providing them with access to the essential products and supplies they need.

We appreciate that you have called on your Administration to strengthen our supply chains and recently stated: "If federal support is needed, I will direct all appropriate action<sup>1</sup>." In that spirit, we ask for your leadership on the following five actions:

### **1. Younger Driver Pilot Program**

We believe it is imperative to attract younger commercial drivers into our industries. We strongly support a pilot program that will enable employers to create a two-stage, safety-focused apprenticeship program to allow younger, qualified drivers – between the ages of 18 and 20 – who satisfy rigorous safety, training, and technology requirements to operate in interstate commerce. With 49 states and the District of Columbia already allowing drivers under the age of 21 to get their commercial driver's license and operate intrastate, this pilot program will provide a real opportunity to address current and future driver shortages by promoting a career pathway in trucking and developing a professional, qualified, and highly-trained emerging transportation workforce.

### **2. Promotion of Careers in Transportation and the Supply Chain**

We must work together to highlight the importance of transportation and supply chain jobs and how crucial they are to America's families and communities. We encourage federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Labor, to collaborate with industry and state and local partners to promote transportation and supply chain occupations, particularly commercial truck driving, as a career of choice. Commercial truck drivers enjoy stability, good benefits, and higher-than-average wages. We can improve the lives of many unemployed and underemployed Americans by giving them opportunities for advancement while boosting the economy.

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<sup>1</sup>[Remarks by President Biden on Efforts to Address Global Transportation Supply Chain Bottlenecks](#)

### **3. Flexibility in Vaccine Mandates**

Our industries are committed partners in the fight against COVID-19, and we unequivocally support the use of vaccines to fight its spread. However, we are concerned a mandate will cripple an already strained supply chain. We estimate companies covered by the mandate could lose 37% of drivers at a time when the nation is already short 80,000 truck drivers. We ask for flexibility for transportation and supply chain essential workers, particularly truck drivers who spend most of their time in their trucks and have minimal contact with colleagues and customers.

### **4. Hours of Service Relief**

Regulatory flexibilities, especially during emergencies, are vital to supply chain continuity. We continue to support last year's changes to the hours of service regulations that give commercial truck drivers greater flexibility while improving safety and efficiency. We encourage the Administration to retain these changes and consider providing additional flexibilities that may be needed for the timely delivery of essential goods and that make sense from a safety and operational standpoint. Such flexibility is particularly important at ports that are open 24 hours to help alleviate current bottlenecks.

### **5. Flow of Goods through Ports**

We encourage the Administration to continue to investigate the causes of inefficiencies at our nation's ports, draw input from a wide variety of supply chain stakeholders, and work collaboratively to minimize the bottlenecks and operational practices that prevent the seamless movement of cargo through the supply chain. Through continued dialogue and information sharing, appropriate action can be taken to ensure resources and equipment are utilized efficiently and effectively to improve performance at our nation's ports.

We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association  
Agriculture Transportation Coalition  
Air Conditioning Contractors of America  
American Apparel & Footwear Association  
American Bakers Association  
American Chemistry Council  
American Coatings Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Forest & Paper Association  
American Foundry Society

American Frozen Food Institute  
American Lighting Association  
American Supply Association  
American Trucking Associations  
AmericanHort  
Associated Builders and Contractors  
Associated Equipment Distributors  
Associated General Contractors of America  
Auto Care Association  
Brick Industry Association  
Commercial Vehicle Training Association  
Consumer Brands Association  
Convenience Distribution Association  
Cotton Warehouse Association of America  
Council of Fashion Designers of America  
Decorative Hardwoods Association  
Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.  
Energy Marketers Association  
FMI – The Food Industry Association  
Foodservice Equipment Distributors Association  
Forest Resources Association  
Gases and Welding Distributors Association  
Independent Bakers Association  
Independent Electrical Contractors  
Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association  
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils  
International Association of Plastics Distribution  
International Bottled Water Association  
International Dairy Foods Association  
International Foodservice Distributors Association  
International Franchise Association  
International Warehouse Logistics Association  
Manufacturer & Business Association  
National Aquaculture Association  
National Association of Chemical Distributors  
National Association of Convenience Stores  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
National Automatic Merchandising Association  
National Beer Wholesalers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Energy & Fuels Institute  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Grocers Association

National Industrial Transportation League  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Private Truck Council  
National Propane Gas Association  
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association  
National Restaurant Association  
National Retail Federation  
National Roofing Contractors Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association  
National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc.  
NATSO, Representing America's Travel Centers and Truck Stops  
NCA – The National Confectioners Association  
Next Generation in Trucking Association  
North American Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Distributors  
North American Millers' Association  
North American Renderers Association  
Pet Food Institute  
Pet Industry Distributors Association  
Portland Cement Association  
Power and Communication Contractors Association  
Power Transmission Distributors Association  
PRINTING United Alliance  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
SIGMA: America's Leading Fuel Marketers  
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council  
SNAC International  
Southwest Council of Agribusiness  
Specialty Soya & Grains Alliance  
The Fertilizer Institute  
Transportation Intermediaries Association  
Travel Goods Association  
Truckload Carriers Association  
Turfgrass Producers International  
United Fresh Produce Association  
USA Rice  
Western Peanut Growers Association  
Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America  
Wine Institute