# Congress of the United States
## House of Representatives
## Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable LTG Darrell K. Williams
Director
Defense Logistics Agency
Attn: Distribution
Andrew T. McNamara Building
8725 John J. Kingman Road
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Terry E. Branstad
U.S. Ambassador to China
U.S. Embassy Beijing
55 Anjialou Rd, Chaoyang District
Beijing, China 100600

Dr. Michael L. Beeman
Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for
Japan, Korea, and APEC
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear LTG Williams, Ambassador Lighthizer, Ambassador Branstad, and Dr. Beeman:

Having spoken with hospitals, doctors, health care providers, and emergency management coordinators across our districts over the last week as the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak spreads, we have heard concerns that the United States will experience a dire shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) if we do not act now.

Our health providers require PPE that includes N95 masks, ventilators, gloves, gowns, shoe covers, hand sanitizer, and other essential basic supplies to address this outbreak. While we are glad to see the President has authorized the Defense Production Act and that the Department of Defense is providing five million respirators, we remain concerned that this will not provide enough supplies in time.

The urgent public health situation we find ourselves in has made clear the vulnerabilities resulting from our existing supply and sourcing structures. That is why we are requesting you prioritize working with our trading partners to find essential medical equipment and PPE that is readily available and avoid placing any new red tape or restrictions on medical providers as they seek to obtain this equipment promptly from available sources. We continue to support American innovation in this space, including efforts to manufacture more PPE at home, to work with private industry to switch production to PPE wherever possible, and to encourage American innovators to develop new ways to address the shortage, such as creating new methods to safely and responsibly decontaminate PPE for reuse. Unfortunately, not enough PPE is domestically available for immediate use; despite the best efforts of industry and the Administration, we must turn to our international trading partners for a rapid response to the current pandemic. Additionally, we are committed to working within Congress and with the Administration on measures to improve our resilience and prevent this from happening in the future.

The limited supply of PPE available is hampering our ability to treat and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic across the country. Proper equipment will ensure that we can transfer non-COVID-19 patients from hospitals, freeing up bed space. It will ensure that our health care workforce stays healthy and ready to respond. And it will bring peace of mind to every American to know we are better prepared to handle this outbreak.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our offices if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Troy Balderson
Member of Congress

Also signed by the following Members of the House of Representatives:

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Sanford Bishop
Anthony G. Brown
Ken Calvert
Matt Cartwright
Sean Casten
David N. Cicilline
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Emanuel Cleaver
Steve Cohen
TJ Cox
Angie Craig
Jason Crow
Judy Chu
Madeleine Dean
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Veronica Escobar
Dwight Evans
Abby Finkenauer
Bill Foster
Marcia L. Fudge
Josh Harder
Denny Heck
Tulsi Gabbard
Ruben Gallego
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Mary Gay Scanlon
Bob Gibbs
Anthony Gonzalez
Raúl M. Grijalva
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Pramila Jayapal
Andy Kim
Ron Kind
Adam Kinzinger
Darin LaHood
Connor Lamb
Barbara Lee
Mike Levin
Dave Loebsack
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Ben McAdams
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