

January 8, 2021

Joe Biden
President-Elect
P.O. BOX 96663
Washington, DC 20077-7085

Dear President-Elect Biden:

On behalf of the 23 million skilled men and women who work in the United States food and agriculture sector, we congratulate you once again on your election. Your leadership at this critical juncture for our country is vital to manage the COVID-19 pandemic and heal our country and economy. We are reaching out now to offer our partnership on an effort to ensure essential workers have access to vaccinations once sufficient doses of the coronavirus vaccine are provided at local levels.

The workers throughout the food and agriculture supply chain, as part of the nation's critical infrastructure, have been on the job during the pandemic. During your campaign for President, you—on several occasions—recognized the dedication of these workers and we are grateful for your support. Through their efforts Americans have been able to count on a safe, stable supply of food and beverages to sustain them through this crisis.

We have continued to underscore to members of your Transition Team that the food industry is ready and willing to partner with your Administration as well as local health departments to help administer vaccinations. To do this effectively and expeditiously, we recommend that once you take office, you designate a Federal Coronavirus Vaccine Coordinator in each of the 50 states as well as territories. For example, state emergency management officers—who are already experienced in coordinating logistics and have relationships with key stakeholders—serve as a good model considering their ability to coordinate at all levels of government and the private sector and could help ensure rapid and efficient deployment of vaccines. The Coordinators' responsibilities will be to liaise directly with state, territory, and local public health agencies while providing access to the resources of the federal government to ensure an efficient distribution of the vaccine among priority populations—such as frontline healthcare workers, older Americans, those with preexisting conditions, and essential workers—as the vaccine becomes available.

The Coordinators would also assist in developing and strengthening partnerships among the state, territory, and local public health agencies and private sector employers to facilitate vaccine distribution among priority populations, including essential workers. This could be done by expanding the March 13, 2020, Emergency Declaration to include language on vaccine distribution and the establishment of these Federal Coronavirus Vaccine Coordinators.

Private employers across the food and food retail supply chains in 50 states and U.S. territories directly support over 23 million essential jobs, from those working on farms and ranches to food processing facilities to food retail establishments like grocery stores. Many of these employers have expressed their strong interest in supporting state, territory, and local public health agencies in vaccine distribution, and we expect other industries would do the same. Many companies across the food supply chain have retained nurses and healthcare professionals to assist with vaccinations when they are available. Please take advantage of this opportunity to establish a robust public-private partnership to meet this challenging time.

If your Administration should find it helpful, we as an industry will provide a comprehensive list of companies that will step forward to offer their partnership on vaccine distribution, including their

geographic locations and the number of workers they employ. We hope this list could serve as a blueprint for a public-private partnership led by the Federal Coordinators.

As you form your Administration, please know that we offer our partnership with you and your team. A strong, coordinated response at the federal level is critical to our industry's ability to meet this moment and your Administration's leadership is essential. We are as committed as ever to ensuring Americans have access to affordable, healthy, nutritious, and safe food. Our industries stand ready to partner with your Administration to ensure a strong, coordinated public education campaign brings widespread and sustained acceptance of vaccinations among the public.

Congratulations again on your victory.

Respectfully submitted,

American Bakers Association

American Beverage Association

American Frozen Foods Institute

Consumer Brands Association

Corn Refiners Association

Distilled Spirits Council of the United States

FMI – the Food Industry Association

Global Cold Chain Alliance

International Dairy Foods Association

National Automatic Merchandising Association

National Beer Wholesalers Association

National Grocers Association

North American Meat Institute

SNAC International

United Fresh Produce Association