

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

We, the undersigned coalition of association leaders – from foodservice and trucking to warehousing and (*insert other industries represented*) – 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 action¹.” 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.

¹[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 two largest 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,

Agriculture Transportation Coalition
Air Conditioning Contractors of America
American Bakers Association
American Chemistry Council
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Trucking Associations
Associated Equipment Distributors
Associated General Contractors of America
Commercial Vehicle Training Association

Consumer Brands Association
Energy Marketers Association
FMI – The Food Industry Association
Forest Resources Association
Gases and Welding Distributors Association
Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association
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 Home Builders
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Energy & Fuels Institute
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grocers Association
National Private Truck Council
National Propane Gas Association
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association
National Restaurant Association
National Roofing Contractors Association
National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc.
NATSO, Representing America's Travel Centers and Truck Stops
Pet Food Institute
Pet Industry Distributors Association
Portland Cement Association
Power and Communication Contractors Association
Power Transmission Distributors Association
Retail Industry Leaders Association
SIGMA: America's Leading Fuel Marketers
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council
The Next Generation in Trucking Association
Truckload Carriers Association
Turfgrass Producers International
United Fresh Produce Association