

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

We support prioritizing the healthcare sector for COVID-19 testing supplies, and as testing becomes more available and abundant, the undersigned organizations urge the federal government to provide COVID-19 testing resources to U.S. employers that are engaged in essential business services. Increased access to COVID-19 testing for our workforce will help flatten the curve by removing people with coronavirus from the workplace and better ensure the safety and health of employees who are maintaining operations during this pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced workplaces across the U.S. to close or limit operations to protect public health and safety. As of April 1, 55 states and territories had some closures of non-essential businesses,¹ and 28 states and territories have prohibited in-person workforces for non-essential businesses.² However, states and territories have deemed some businesses and sectors as “essential,” and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has issued guidance on the essential critical infrastructure workforce.³

Employees engaged in critical infrastructure and essential business are required to be at a physical worksite in some proximity to other employees and/or customers. We have a responsibility to ensure that they can perform their work in a safe environment, and access to testing would help us do so.

We are especially concerned by reports that as many as 25% of people infected with COVID-19 may not show any symptoms but can still spread the disease.⁴ A lack of easily accessible COVID-19 testing means that some of our employees may unknowingly be coming to work and spreading the disease to their co-workers and the public.

We share your goals to keep our family, friends, neighbors and colleagues safe and healthy while allowing essential services to continue operation. Therefore, we ask for your help by providing access to testing and timely results for our employees.

Sincerely,

AES Corporation
American Association on Health and Disability
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)
American Public Gas Association
American Staffing Association
American Sugar Alliance
American Trucking Associations
Arizona Chapter National Safety Council
Association of American Railroads
Association of Energy Service Companies
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Board of Certified Safety Professionals

¹ <https://www.nga.org/coronavirus>

² Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma (in counties with reported community spread), Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin

³ <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/31/health/coronavirus-asymptomatic-transmission.html>

Chesapeake Region Safety Council
Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance
Council for Dredging & Marine Construction Safety
CropLife America
DEKRA NA Consulting
Dredging Contractors of America
Environmental Resources Management
Florida Chamber Safety Council
Global Cold Chain Alliance
Houston Area Safety Council
Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries
International Warehouse Logistics Association
International Window Cleaning Association
Iowa-Illinois Safety Council, Inc.
ISN Software Corporation
Knauf Insulation Inc.
Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America
Laborers' International Union of North America
Lakeshore Foundation
Minnesota Safety Council
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cotton Council
National Demolition Association, Inc.
National Pork Producers Council
National Safety Council
National Safety Council Ark-La-Tex Chapter, Inc.
National Safety Council of Northern New England
National Safety Council Ohio Chapter
National Safety Council, Nebraska
National Waste and Recycling Association
NENY Safety & Health Council
North Dakota Safety Council
Nutrien
Oklahoma Safety Council
RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment)
Safety and Health Council of North Carolina
Safety Council of Western New England
Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)
South Dakota Safety Council
Southeastern Chapter National safety Council
Tennessee Safety and Health Council
The Fertilizer Institute
Tree Care Industry Association
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Rice Federation
USG Corporation
Utah Safety Council
Virginia Ship Repair Association
Wisconsin Safety Council
Wyoming Montana Safety Council

CC:

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Chad F. Wolf, Acting Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency