

March 21, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing all sectors of the retail community, and many of the businesses their operations support, we want to applaud your administration and Congress for taking swift action to address the health and safety issues from the Coronavirus as well as the overall impact on the U.S. economy. Retail is the largest private-sector employer, with 52 million workers — fully 1 in 4 U.S. workers — directly or indirectly employed in retail and related businesses, such as manufacturing, design and logistics.

The economic harm from social distancing and mandatory store closures is real. Layoffs and economic hardship will surely follow, particularly for smaller, specialty retailers and brands. The biggest single issue facing the industry right now is liquidity, and federal stimulus efforts must be swift and flexible enough to address the urgent need for access to credit to keep these businesses afloat.

Research from the National Retail Federation initially predicts the U.S. retail sector could see a reduction of 20% or more in retail sales over a period of three months, based on similar declines in China. A 20% reduction in sales over a 3-month period would result in a total estimated loss of \$429.9 billion when considering both direct and indirect sales. Most notably, this sharp decline in retail activity would place 1.7 million American jobs in peril. Of course, with the virus continuing to spread and economic damage being compounded, lost retail sales could climb much higher — between 50% and 80% in some sectors — with even more American jobs jeopardized. Unless immediate steps are taken, these dire economic outcomes could persist for many months.

The economic stimulus packages that are being considered must address the concerns of all different kinds and sizes of retail business, including their suppliers. While some retail businesses may be considered “essential” and may be able to remain open, many will not. It is important that the stimulus package provide a bridge, not a bailout, that is flexible enough for retailers and related suppliers of any size to take advantage.

Retailers are not only the bedrock of the U.S. economy, but also support many supply chains throughout the U.S. and the local communities they serve. Our collective members are working to ensure the health and safety of their employees, supply chain partners and customers first and foremost. We want to make sure these companies are able to continue operations when we eventually get through this crisis.

We thank you for your ongoing efforts and stand ready to work with you for swift passage on these packages.

Accessories Council	Maryland Retailers Association
Alabama Retail Association	Maryland Association of Chain Drug Stores
Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers	Michigan Retailers Association
American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA)	Minnesota Retailers Association
American Bridal & Prom Industry Association (ABPIA)	Missouri Retailers Association
American Down and Feather Council	Montana Retail Association
American Home Furnishings Alliance	National Association of Chain Drug Stores
Arizona Retailers Association	National Confectioners Association
Arkansas Grocery and Retail Association	National Association of Music Merchants
California Retailers Association	National Office Products Alliance
Carolinas Food Industry Council	National Retail Federation
Colorado Retail Council	National Ski & Snowboard Retailers (NSSRA)
Connecticut Retail Merchants Association	National Sporting Goods Association
Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)	Nebraska Retail Federation
Fashion Accessories Shippers Association	New Hampshire Retail Association
Fashion Jewelry & Accessories Trade Association	New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
FFANY Fashion Footwear Association of New York	New Mexico Retail Association
Florida Retail Federation	North American Retail Hardware Association (NRHA)
FMI - The Food Industry Association	North Carolina Retail Merchants Association
Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA)	Office Furniture Dealers Association
Gemini Shippers Association	Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
Georgia Retailers	Oklahoma Retail Merchants Association
Greeting Card Association	Oregon Business & Industry
Halloween Industry Association	Outdoor Industry Association
Home Fashion Products Association	Pennsylvania Retailers' Association
Home Furnishings Association	Pet Industry Distributors Association
Idaho Retailers Association	Pet Food Institute
Illinois Retail Merchants Association	Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
Independent Office Products Alliance	Retail Association of Maine
Indiana Retail Council	Retail Association of Nevada
International Housewares Association	Retail Council of New York State
Iowa Retail Federation	Retail Industry Leaders Association
Jewelers of America	Retail Merchants of Hawaii
Jewelry Vigilance Committee	Retailers Association of Massachusetts
Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association	Snowsports Industries America
Kentucky Retail Federation	South Carolina Retail Association
Louisiana Retailers Association	South Dakota Retailers Association
	Tennessee Retail Association
	Texas Retailers Association
	The Maryland Food Industry Council
	The Toy Association
	The Vision Council
	Travel Goods Association (TGA)

Tri State Jewelers Association
United States Fashion Industry Association
Utah Retail Merchants Association
Vermont Retail & Grocers Association
Virginia Retail Federation

Virginia Retail Merchants Association
Washington Retail Association
Women's Jewelry Association
World Pet Association

CC: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer