

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.

1. Accessories Council
2. Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers
3. American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA)
4. American Bridal & Prom Industry Association (ABPIA)
5. American Down and Feather Council
6. American Home Furnishings Alliance
7. Arizona Retailers Association
8. California Retailers Association
9. Carolinas Food Industry Council
10. Colorado Retail Council
11. Connecticut Retail Merchants Association
12. Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)
13. Fashion Accessories Shippers Association
14. Fashion Jewelry & Accessories Trade Association
15. FFANY I Fashion Footwear Association of New York
16. Florida Retail Federation
17. FMI - The Food Industry Association
18. Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA)
19. Gemini Shippers Association
20. Georgia Retailers
21. Greeting Card Association
22. Halloween Industry Association
23. Home Fashion Products Association
24. Home Furnishings Association
25. Idaho Retailers Association
26. Illinois Retail Merchants Association
27. Independent Office Products Alliance
28. Indiana Retail Council
29. International Housewares Association
30. Jewelers of America
31. Jewelry Vigilance Committee
32. Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association
33. Kentucky Retail Federation
34. Louisiana Retailers Association
35. Maryland Retailers Association
36. Maryland Association of Chain Drug Stores
37. Michigan Retailers Association
38. Minnesota Retailers Association
39. Missouri Retailers Association
40. Montana Retail Association
41. National Confectioners Association
42. National Association of Music Merchants
43. National Office Products Alliance

44. National Retail Federation
45. National Sporting Goods Association
46. Nebraska Retail Federation
47. New Hampshire Retail Association
48. New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
49. New Mexico Retail Association
50. North American Retail Hardware Association (NRHA)
51. North Carolina Retail Merchants Association
52. Office Furniture Dealers Association
53. Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
54. Oklahoma Retail Merchants Association
55. Oregon Business & Industry
56. Outdoor Industry Association
57. Pennsylvania Retailers' Association
58. Pet Industry Distributors Association
59. Pet Food Institute
60. Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
61. Retail Association of Maine
62. Retail Association of Nevada
63. Retail Council of New York State
64. Retail Industry Leaders Association
65. Retail Merchants of Hawaii
66. Retailers Association of Massachusetts
67. Snowsports Industries America
68. South Carolina Retail Association
69. South Dakota Retailers Association
70. Texas Retailers Association
71. The Maryland Food Industry Council
72. The Toy Association
73. The Vision Council
74. Travel Goods Association (TGA)
75. Tri State Jewelers Association
76. United States Fashion Industry Association
77. Utah Retail Merchants Association
78. Vermont Retail & Grocers Association
79. Virginia Retail Federation
80. Virginia Retail Merchants Association
81. Washington Retail Association
82. Women's Jewelry Association

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