



March 18, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

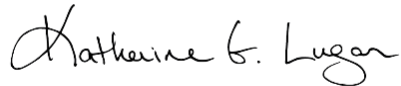
As America works together to address the challenges of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the nation's food and beverage manufacturers, distributors, suppliers and retail partners are working tirelessly to meet the needs in our communities for food, beverages and common grocery items as timely and efficiently as possible.

To help America's food manufacturers and suppliers operate during this national emergency, the American Beverage Association – which represents the nation's non-alcoholic beverage companies -- requests that the federal government take the following actions:

1. **Essential Services Exemptions:** Food and beverage manufacturing and distribution is an “essential service.” As such, companies and employees involved in the manufacture, distribution, delivery and stocking of food and beverage items must be exempted from any federal, state or local declaration of emergency, imposition of curfew or shelter in place restrictions.
2. **Federal Action on Truck Weight Restrictions:** Truck weight limits are historically governed by state law and lifted during emergencies on a state-by-state basis, but the current crisis demands nationwide action. Therefore, we ask for an Executive Order to temporarily waive state truck weight restrictions – or increase allowable truck weight to at least 90,000 pounds – for delivery of essential goods in response to COVID-19. There is an urgent need to deliver food, beverages, medical supplies and other goods to communities across America. A temporary federal emergency declaration lifting truck weight restrictions nationwide will help facilitate meeting this critical need.
3. **Hours of Service Clarification:** Earlier this week, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration provided relief from Hours of Service regulations for commercial motor vehicle operations providing direct assistance supporting emergency relief efforts intended to meet immediate needs. The regulatory notice, however, created some ambiguity in referencing that it did not apply to “routine commercial deliveries.” We request that FMCSA clarify in writing that the restocking of grocery store shelves by delivery drivers is included in what constitutes direct assistance for supporting emergency relief efforts.

American consumers should know that, building on decades of good business practices and responsible regulatory policies for good manufacturing and food safety, the food and beverage industry will continue to follow all federal, state and local regulations and guidance. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration, there is currently no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19. With the regulatory actions identified here, the federal government can help our industry make sure that food, beverages and common grocery items are getting to our communities as timely and efficiently as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine G. Lugar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

Katherine Lugar
President & CEO