



March 18, 2020

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. President, Madam Speaker, Republican Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

Thank you for the considerable efforts of your Administration to address the COVID-19 pandemic. While events are unfolding at a rapid rate and with a high degree of uncertainty, The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) and our members are taking steps to remain fully operational throughout the duration of this event while taking necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of our employees and the communities in which we operate. As you and your Administration continue to respond to the rapidly evolving situation with COVID-19, we request that the federal government recognize fertilizer and all agriculture inputs as “essential services” in order to ensure that American agriculture can remain operable and unfettered.

TFI represents fertilizer manufacturers, transporters, wholesalers, importers, brokers and retailers. Our members provide plant nutrients that are responsible for nearly half of the world’s food supply. The fertilizer industry supports nearly 500,000 American jobs and has an economic impact of over \$130 billion annually.

The next six to eight weeks will be crucial to our members and their farmer customers, as they conduct spring planting activities. The timely delivery of plant nutrients to American

farmers is critical to their ability to produce food, fuel, and fiber. In order to get plant nutrients to the farm, the fertilizer industry relies on a safe and efficient transportation network, including rail carriers, ports, barges, pipelines, and trucks. In addition, the ability to move products across the border of Canada is also an important part of the fertilizer supply chain.

While we are not aware of any prohibitions contemplated on interstate shipments of goods to contain the spread of COVID-19 at this time, any such constraints could cripple the ability of our members to provide farmers with the fertilizers they need in a very limited planting window. As your Administration considers measures to respond to COVID-19, we ask that fertilizer be appropriately prioritized to ensure our food supply is not disrupted. Again, fertilizer is responsible for 50 percent of crop yields. It is essential to our nation's agricultural production and food supply. We have already shared with the Department of Transportation consideration for potentially expanding temporary hours of service (HOS) exemptions for fertilizer shippers. With the spring planting season upon us now, this would help limit potential disruptions to our industry.

Thank you again for your efforts during this very difficult time for our nation and the world. We stand ready to assist you and your Administration in any way that we can to support a strong and fully operational American food supply chain. Thank you for considering our perspectives on this matter. You may reach me at: (202) 962-0490 or crosenbusch@tfi.org to address any question regarding our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Corey Rosenbusch', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Corey Rosenbusch
President/CEO

CC: The Vice President, Mike Pence
The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary of Transportation
The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Chad Wolf, Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Collin Peterson, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Michael Conaway, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Agriculture