

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

I write to urge you to immediately take action to increase the long-term domestic supply chain for personal protective equipment (PPE) in the United States. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed significant shortcomings in our nation's ability to rapidly produce PPE of sufficient quality and quantity to respond to a national emergency of this nature. Your administration must leverage the untapped potential of American industry to rapidly increase PPE production, not just now but well into the future.

The lack of effective PPE in the United States has significantly hamstrung the efforts of our medical professionals, first responders and all those on the frontlines responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. States, localities, hospitals and other organizations seeking supplies have been forced to compete for PPE entering the country from abroad. Often times, these entities have resorted to private individuals to donate PPE and coordinate shipments from abroad. Despite the best efforts of the career civil servants at our federal agencies, the supply of PPE that the federal government has on hand is woefully inadequate to address the needs of our states. Under existing authorities, federal agencies within your control have the ability to invest in and contract with American companies absent the use of emergency powers available under the Defense Production Act.

I know that companies in my state stand ready to work with the federal government and increase production of PPE. For some companies, that may mean repurposing existing infrastructure and for others it may require significant investments to completely alter their business models and lines of production. For example, the DEKA Research and Development Corporation in New Hampshire is currently working with its partners to stand up production lines for critical face masks. I urge you to direct the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense to work with companies like DEKA and provide them with the immediate and long-term funding and purchase orders they need to increase domestic PPE production.

I also encourage your administration to support proposals in Congress that invest in our domestic supply chain for PPE and increase the percentage of PPE that the federal government buys from American companies. The jobs created by bolstering our domestic supply chain should remain in America to ensure that PPE and other critical supplies are available in times of need.

As our nation continues to mitigate and respond to the spread of COVID-19, we must first and foremost address the immediate PPE needs of the most vulnerable and those on the frontlines. However, we should also take action now to ensure that the American supply chain for these essential supplies remains strong well into the future. Rebuilding the domestic supply chain for PPE must be a priority as we seek to improve the nation's health, security and economic well-being.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator