



March 18, 2020

Vice President Michael R. Pence
Office of the Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Pence:

I am writing on behalf of the Convenience Distribution Association (CDA) to urge you to ensure convenience stores and their wholesale distributor partners remain open during these unprecedented times. CDA is the trade organization working on behalf of convenience products wholesale distributors in the United States. Its distributor members represent more than \$102 billion in U.S convenience product sales, serving a wide variety of small retail formats. Associate members include leading convenience product manufacturers, brokers, retailers, and others allied to the industry.

Convenience stores are critical in this time of need as they provide essential services and products in communities. This includes critical fuel availability for healthcare and medical professionals, first responders, delivery workers and everyone else who needs to travel the roads. Without convenience stores selling fuel, for example, supply chains and deliveries will be disrupted. When disasters or emergencies occur, convenience stores, most of which offer 24-hour operations, remain in operation as long as they can without putting their own employees' safety and wellbeing in harm's way. This means making sure fuel, food and other necessities are available for emergency workers and customers in need. Convenience stores sell most of the gasoline purchased in the country—approximately 80% of all fuel sold in the United States (with many stores provide hand sanitizer and/or gloves at the pump).

The proximity of convenience stores to consumers is key, with 93% of Americans living within 10 minutes of a convenience store (including 86% of rural Americans). People are able to quickly acquire critical items in their own neighborhood, thus limiting their need to travel to other locations or larger stores. Convenience stores provide essential items and services to consumers including:

- Quick and easy access to cash (they are the location for nearly one-third of all U.S. ATMs)
- Over-the-counter medicine (more than \$2.5 billion in annual sales)
- Milk (\$1.4 billion) and bottled water (47% of all individual bottles—excluding packs)
- Electronic Benefits Transfer: 111,816 convenience stores are authorized to redeem SNAP benefits, which comprise 45% of all SNAP-eligible stores.

In countless rural and urban communities designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "food deserts," convenience stores are the community grocery store, drug store and community hub; serving those who would otherwise be left behind. The small format and quick transaction time means most stores are a manageable size to clean regularly (the average convenience store is 2,951 net square feet) with an average time of under 4 minutes in store for consumers.

Convenience stores are community stores, providing 2.4 million jobs and accounting for more than 34% of all retail outlets in the United States. In fact, the convenience store count is more than the combined total of supermarkets (49,034 stores), drugstores (41,127 stores) dollar stores (33,185 stores) and mass merchandisers (4,032).

CDA respectfully requests your support to allow convenience stores and their wholesale distributor partners to remain open to support our nation in this critical time.

Sincerely,

President & CEO