

DATE

[Governor's Address]

Re: Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine to Employees of Essential Businesses

Dear [Governor],

Our company, a convenience distribution company in [location], appreciates your efforts to devise and implement a distribution framework by which a COVID-19 vaccine is distributed in our state in a fair and efficient manner. Our industry is not alone in looking forward to the day when Americans can access a vaccine and eventually return to life as it was before COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created a playbook to assist state and local public health programs as they plan vaccination responses to the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the CDC's recommendations, we believe that an effective scheme for vaccine distribution requires appropriately prioritizing employees of essential businesses. The playbook advises that essential workers of businesses that are part of the critical infrastructure workforce should receive a vaccine as part of Phase 1-B of a jurisdiction's distribution scheme. Phase 1-B would follow behind only those healthcare personnel who are grouped into Phase 1-A.

The frontline workers in our industry should receive the vaccine as part of the priority Phase 1-B. Employees in our industry serve on the front lines of the food distribution systems across the country. We think this is an appropriate classification for our industry's employees given their necessity to the day-to-day lives of Americans in all walks of life – including first responders. Restocking of food and convenience items to our customers allows for quick shopping trips for American consumers. This is also helpful for first responders, especially because our customer's stores are typically the only ones open extended hours (or 24 hours per day) to serve their needs.

The CDC partnered with the National Institutes of Health and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to determine critical populations for COVID-19 vaccination. The National Academies issued a report in October recommending that frontline workers of essential businesses should receive second-highest priority in vaccine distribution.<sup>2</sup> It notes that the workforce in our industry are people “whose work is vital to the functioning of society and the economy,” and who also face a substantially higher risk of exposure to the virus.

The Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency recognized early on the importance of our industry. In the deployment of a vaccine to protect Americans from COVID-19, that recognition should be applied to these critical workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations – Version 2.0*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Oct. 29, 2020), [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/downloads/COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim\\_Playbook.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/downloads/COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim_Playbook.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Framework for equitable allocation of COVID-19 vaccine*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press (Oct. 2, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.17226/25917>.

Our employees have put themselves at risk since the beginning of the pandemic, working despite health concerns, and we believe they should be prioritized in vaccine deployment. We appreciate your consideration of our comments and sincerely thank you for the hard work you have done to protect the health of our state.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

cc: [State Health Department]