#### Open Letter to President Joe Biden Regarding 5 Immediate Supply Chain Solutions

We, the undersigned coalition of associations, representing agriculture, foodservice, trucking, warehousing, manufacturing, retail, construction, energy, and other key supply chain stakeholders, call on the Biden Administration to work with our industries to address the immense challenges impacting our nation's supply chain.

While we represent different industries, we share the common burden of current supply chain disruptions, which are driving up prices and leading to a growing shortage of goods in the United States, with the holidays just around the corner.

As business leaders and proud Americans, we are firmly committed to this country's economic recovery. We are working to usher in a return to normalcy and striving to help all Americans enjoy a better way of life by providing them with access to the essential products and supplies they need.

We appreciate that you have called on your Administration to strengthen our supply chains and recently stated: "If federal support is needed, I will direct all appropriate action<sup>1</sup>." In that spirit, we ask for your leadership on the following five actions:

# 1. Younger Driver Pilot Program

We believe it is imperative to attract younger commercial drivers into our industries. We strongly support a pilot program that will enable employers to create a two-stage, safety-focused apprenticeship program to allow younger, qualified drivers – between the ages of 18 and 20 – who satisfy rigorous safety, training, and technology requirements to operate in interstate commerce. With 49 states and the District of Columbia already allowing drivers under the age of 21 to get their commercial driver's license and operate intrastate, this pilot program will provide a real opportunity to address current and future driver shortages by promoting a career pathway in trucking and developing a professional, qualified, and highly-trained emerging transportation workforce.

# 2. Promotion of Careers in Transportation and the Supply Chain

We must work together to highlight the importance of transportation and supply chain jobs and how crucial they are to America's families and communities. We encourage federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Labor, to collaborate with industry and state and local partners to promote transportation and supply chain occupations, particularly commercial truck driving, as a career of choice. Commercial truck drivers enjoy stability, good benefits, and higher-than-average wages. We can improve the lives of many unemployed and underemployed Americans by giving them opportunities for advancement while boosting the economy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Remarks by President Biden on Efforts to Address Global Transportation Supply Chain Bottlenecks</u>

## 3. Flexibility in Vaccine Mandates

Our industries are committed partners in the fight against COVID-19, and we unequivocally support the use of vaccines to fight its spread. However, we are concerned a mandate will cripple an already strained supply chain. We estimate companies covered by the mandate could lose 37% of drivers at a time when the nation is already short 80,000 truck drivers. We ask for flexibility for transportation and supply chain essential workers, particularly truck drivers who spend most of their time in their trucks and have minimal contact with colleagues and customers.

#### 4. Hours of Service Relief

Regulatory flexibilities, especially during emergencies, are vital to supply chain continuity. We continue to support last year's changes to the hours of service regulations that give commercial truck drivers greater flexibility while improving safety and efficiency. We encourage the Administration to retain these changes and consider providing additional flexibilities that may be needed for the timely delivery of essential goods and that make sense from a safety and operational standpoint. Such flexibility is particularly important at ports that are open 24 hours to help alleviate current bottlenecks.

## 5. Flow of Goods through Ports

We encourage the Administration to continue to investigate the causes of inefficiencies at our nation's ports, draw input from a wide variety of supply chain stakeholders, and work collaboratively to minimize the bottlenecks and operational practices that prevent the seamless movement of cargo through the supply chain. Through continued dialogue and information sharing, appropriate action can be taken to ensure resources and equipment are utilized efficiently and effectively to improve performance at our nation's ports.

We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association Agriculture Transportation Coalition Air Conditioning Contractors of America American Apparel & Footwear Association American Bakers Association American Chemistry Council American Coatings Association American Farm Bureau Federation American Feed Industry Association American Forest & Paper Association American Foundry Society American Frozen Food Institute American Lighting Association American Supply Association American Trucking Associations AmericanHort Associated Builders and Contractors Associated Equipment Distributors Associated General Contractors of America Auto Care Association **Brick Industry Association Commercial Vehicle Training Association Consumer Brands Association Convenience Distribution Association** Cotton Warehouse Association of America Council of Fashion Designers of America **Decorative Hardwoods Association** Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. **Energy Marketers Association** FMI – The Food Industry Association Foodservice Equipment Distributors Association Forest Resources Association Gases and Welding Distributors Association Independent Bakers Association **Independent Electrical Contractors** Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils International Association of Plastics Distribution International Bottled Water Association International Dairy Foods Association International Foodservice Distributors Association International Franchise Association International Warehouse Logistics Association Manufacturer & Business Association National Aquaculture Association National Association of Chemical Distributors National Association of Convenience Stores National Association of Home Builders National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors National Automatic Merchandising Association National Beer Wholesalers Association National Cotton Council National Council of Farmer Cooperatives National Energy & Fuels Institute National Grain and Feed Association National Grocers Association

National Industrial Transportation League National Milk Producers Federation National Private Truck Council National Propane Gas Association National Ready Mixed Concrete Association National Restaurant Association National Retail Federation National Roofing Contractors Association National Sorghum Producers National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc. NATSO, Representing America's Travel Centers and Truck Stops NCA – The National Confectioners Association Next Generation in Trucking Association North American Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Distributors North American Millers' Association North American Renderers Association Pet Food Institute Pet Industry Distributors Association Portland Cement Association Power and Communication Contractors Association Power Transmission Distributors Association **PRINTING United Alliance Retail Industry Leaders Association** SIGMA: America's Leading Fuel Marketers Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council SNAC International Southwest Council of Agribusiness Specialty Soya & Grains Alliance The Fertilizer Institute Transportation Intermediaries Association Travel Goods Association **Truckload Carriers Association Turfgrass Producers International** United Fresh Produce Association **USA Rice** Western Peanut Growers Association Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America Wine Institute