

# Congress of the United States

Washington D.C. 20515

March 19, 2020

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President,

We are well aware that shortages of critical medical and personal protective equipment are harming our ability to fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, endangering much of society, particularly health care workers, and making it harder to care for those who fall ill.

While your recent announcement to invoke the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. §§4501 et seq.) was needed, it in and of itself is not nearly enough. As the timeline and process of how this invocation is being executed is unclear, I demand you to immediately use all the powers afforded to you by the Defense Production Act to begin the mass production of supplies needed to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondarily, CDC is “encouraging healthcare systems to implement strategies to conserve supplies.”<sup>1</sup> I am extremely concerned that such “strategies” could force frontline health care workers to use protective equipment improperly, or go without it altogether. I have heard from my state and local public health leaders that additional equipment and supplies are direly necessary to respond to the rapidly escalating COVID-19 outbreak in the state of Colorado.

I understand that some supplies are currently being transferred<sup>2</sup> from various National Defense Stockpile locations to the Department of Health and Human Services Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). I strongly urge you to release all available supplies from all relevant stockpiles (e.g., stockpiles housed within the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Defense) in order to have the required supplies and tools needed to swiftly respond to the COVID-19 health crisis while keeping our health care workers and communities safe. Furthermore, I request you provide clarity on how local public health departments can access and receive supplies from the SNS in order to maintain local operations in response to COVID-19.

The detrimental effects of COVID-19 continue to grow exponentially, and there is not a moment to lose. It is crucial we act swiftly to keep our country safe.

Sincerely,



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html#Healthcare\\_Systems](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html#Healthcare_Systems):

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2118112/assistant-to-the-secretary-of-defense-for-public-affairs-jonathan-hoffman-and-j/>