



KATE BROWN
Governor

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20501

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Vice President Pence and Secretary Azar,

We are facing an impending crisis in the State of Oregon. As I have communicated in my last two letters on March 3 and March 11, we do not have sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators to meet the needs of our hospitals, physicians and nurses to provide care to patients and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The resources we have received from the strategic national stockpile are appreciated. However, they are simply not enough, and we expect to run out of these critical resources in the very near future.

I want to be clear: if these resources were available on the commercial market, I would have bought them. Every state in the U.S. is competing to secure these scarce products, and there simply is not enough to go around in the timeframe that we all need. What is available is being prioritized for other states, leaving Oregon with few options. It is extremely alarming to hear that doctors and nurses are reusing their PPE or resorting to making makeshift PPE because it is otherwise not available. I commend the companies that have stepped up to help, but I am concerned that voluntary commitments to ramp up commercial production will not fix this problem in time.

I urge this Administration to use the powers of the Defense Production Act (DPA) to direct industries to manufacture critical PPE items like N95 respirators, gowns, masks, eye protection, testing supplies and ventilators. This action would massively scale up production of reliable supplies to protect our front line health care workers so that they can continue the important work of caring for patients without fear of exposure.

Additionally, Oregonians, like many Americans, see a problem and they want to help fix it. Companies across the state, from Nike and Intel to smaller manufacturers, have reached out and expressed an interest in repurposing their facilities and staff to manufacture PPE and ventilators. They have the equipment, expertise and workforce to get this done. However, they are facing federal red tape in moving PPE products and ventilators to production.

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I request that the Federal Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention either issue guidance and make available the manufacturing standards and specifications for additional manufacturers to make PPE and ventilators or work with these companies to temporarily expedite the evaluation and approval process to make these items. We cannot sit idly by when there is a global shortage, and we have companies ready, willing, and able to help ensure that this does not turn into a preventable crisis for our health care workers.

I appreciate your prompt attention to these requests, and look forward to our continued collaboration in the response to COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor Kate Brown

cc: Dr. Robert Redfield, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Dr. Stephen M. Hahn, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration