



May 21, 2021

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thom Tillis
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Bennet and Tillis:

The American Mask Manufacturer's Association (AMMA) writes in support of your amendment seeking to enhance domestic supply chain elasticity and establish and maintain domestic reserves of critical medical supplies. AMMA and its 27 member companies appreciate your efforts to strengthen the domestic personal protection equipment (PPE) industry so that Americans will never again be forced to rely on a foreign nation for protection in times of need.

Ensuring that Americans have access to the PPE they need is a bipartisan issue. Members of Congress from both parties and the Biden administration support domestic PPE manufacturing. Secretary Xavier Becerra himself has been a great champion and committed himself and the Department of Health and Human Services to working with Congress in support of U.S. domestic mask manufacturers at a hearing earlier this month. AMMA members from around the country appreciate this support and stand ready to support Congress' efforts in any way that we can.

However, American mask manufacturing is in a state of crisis and may not exist if urgent action is not taken very soon.

Chinese manufacturers of PPE masks are actively undercutting our ability to compete fairly in the U.S. marketplace, selling masks in U.S. markets below the cost of the raw materials needed to make them (not including production, packaging, supply chain and sales or other marketing costs that U.S. manufacturers shoulder). These efforts appear to a growing number of entities as an effort to undercut the PPE mask industry in the United States in order to regain the market share Chinese manufacturers lost because of the COVID-19 pandemic. These tactics are working. Almost all fifty states have or will be buying foreign supplies of PPE masks this year while more than 260 million domestically sourced and produced face coverings sit in warehouses all over the United States. All this while the Chinese government and private companies such as Alibaba are actively blocking our efforts to sell our masks to Chinese citizens.

In addition, there is growing evidence that a preponderance of foreign sourced masks are failing even the most basic U.S. quality control standards thereby jeopardizing the health and welfare of our front-line medical workers and all Americans. Researchers at ECRI, a not-for-profit organization that has advised hospitals, government entities and other healthcare stakeholders for decades on product safety, has found that 60 to 70 percent of imported masks filter aerosol particulates at levels below what the U.S. government has deemed safe. Due to the anti-competitive actions noted above, U.S. hospitals have unwittingly been purchasing hundreds of millions of Chinese-produced masks in 2021 that are not safe and effective against the spread of COVID-19. According to ECRI President and CEO Marcus Schabacker, MD, Ph.D, "using masks that don't meet U.S. standards puts patients and frontline healthcare workers at risk of infection. As

ECRI research shows, we strongly recommend that healthcare providers going forward do more diligence before purchasing masks that aren't made or certified in America.”

We are quickly running out of options. Chinese manufacturer pricing models are not sustainable on their own. Concerns have been raised that the industry is being heavily subsidized in order to drive U.S. manufacturers out of business entirely. Combined with the anti-competitive business practices mentioned above, our members are currently pursuing a trade complaint with the World Trade Organization against the Chinese government. Unfortunately, most U.S. mask manufacturers will likely not be around long enough to see it through.

We and millions of Americans need urgent action from Congress and the Biden administration to ensure that quality U.S. mask manufacturing continues in America. Twenty five percent of the domestic mask manufacturing market that helped the U.S. respond to global shortages last year closed its doors this month. If a solution to China's anticompetitive practices is not addressed in 60 days, AMMA predicts significantly more will be permanently gone.

Our industry needs help now to allow Congress the time necessary to develop a comprehensive and permanent solution. We understand the critical national security role we must play in the coming months and years and stand ready to serve. We have committed to Members of Congress and our partners within the Biden Administration that we will continue working with them as long as we can keep our doors open.

Given that the United States is supplying masks and other PPE to countries around the world, like India, combined with the stockpile needs of the Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. policymakers can solve this problem tomorrow through use of the Strategic National Stockpile or other. Funding efforts to buy American masks now for use in support of foreign countries anticipated shortly can be a bipartisan solution to our industries trade problem.

The Bennet-Tillis Amendment would accomplish this goal, allowing our industry to weather these tough times while supporting the work of Congress to establish a permanent solution. We therefore urge all members of Congress to support the Bennet-Tillis Amendment.

We stand ready to support your efforts in any way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Dillie". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Brent Dillie
Chairman
American Mask Manufacturer's Association