



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
OCCUPATIONAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Bobby Scott, Chairman
Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman
HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Scott and Alexander, Ranking Members Foxx and Murray:

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) is the premier national medical association representing more than 4,000 occupational and environmental medicine physicians and other related health professionals who champion the health of workers, the safety of workplaces, and the quality of the environment.

We note with concern Tuesday's decision by President Trump to utilize the Defense Production Act to compel meat processing plants to remain open and functioning during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed executive order is expected to protect those meat-processing plants from COVID-19-related liability.

ACOEM recognizes the critical importance of maintaining America's food supply. We also appreciate the government's commitment to ensuring additional protective gear for workers. Accordingly, we ask the Congress and OSHA to ensure that any indemnification provided to this industry be directly tied to specific requirements to protect the health and safety of industry workers from COVID-19. A safety-first approach protects the supply chain by protecting the workers on which it depends. ACOEM continues to support requiring OSHA to issue an emergency workplace safety standard to protect all workers from COVID-19.

We urge your Committees to take immediate action to ensure that the Defense Protection Act is not used to shield meat processing plants from liability for the health and safety of their workers.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please do not hesitate to contact [Patrick O'Connor](#), ACOEM's Director of Government Affairs, at 703-351-6222 if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Frangos, MD, MPH, FACOEM
President