

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
PO Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your leadership to protect the health and safety of all Texans during from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Texas Chemical Council is closely monitoring all local, state and federal government communications and is relaying guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to our member companies and their 200 manufacturing facilities across the state to promote best practices and undertake every precaution to protect their employees.

We recognize that extraordinary measures are prudent and necessary to prevent the spread of infection, including the prevention of large public gathering and limitation of non-essential business activity at public places including restaurants, retail establishments, and other public services. While these protections are in the best interest of public health, **it is critically important that key critical infrastructure and industry sectors including the chemical manufacturing sector be able to maintain operations throughout this challenging time.**

TCC member companies have instituted work from home for all non-essential employees and have adopted significant precautions including increased employee hygiene, increase sanitation and disinfection of the work place, and social distancing for all remaining essential workers. However, the operation of these sophisticated manufacturing plants cannot be done remotely and requires the day-to-day presence of highly trained personnel, and ensuring access to critical supplies and transportation systems so our industry can continue to produce and deliver essential products for critical infrastructure, health professionals, emergency responders, as well as consumers.

The business of chemical manufacturing in the U.S. is a \$553 billion enterprise that touches nearly every aspect of our nation's economy. The chemical industry supports a vast supply chain that includes 96 percent of all manufactured goods. Because the business of chemistry is fundamental to our nation's economy and vital to the continued operation of key sectors including medical, energy and public safety, **the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has classified the Chemical Sector as a Critical Infrastructure Sector.**

The role of chemistry is particularly important today as chemicals enable countless products that will be needed to support good hygiene and treat those who are infected with the Coronavirus in the weeks and months ahead.

For example, chemical biocides and disinfectants are the active ingredients in cleaning products that eliminate bacterial and viruses on a personal, household and industrial scale. Single use plastic products and packaging help prevent contamination of food, medicine, personal care and medical products and help prevent person-to-person transmission of disease-causing microorganisms. Personal hygiene products including diapers, soaps, detergents, toothpastes and other antiseptics such as isopropyl alcohol and hydrogen peroxide are all reliant on chemicals and chemical production. Chemicals are necessary to fertilize and protect crops that comprise our nation's food supply and chlorine chemistry is essential to protecting our nation's drinking water.

Plastics and chemicals are vital to keeping medical environments and treatments sanitary, safe and effective. For example, polycarbonate is necessary to produce syringes, surgical instruments, and IV components. Biocides and chlorine are needed to disinfect surfaces and keep drinking water clean. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is used in medical tubing, blood and IV bags. Polypropylene is a key component of medical-grade personal protective equipment including masks, gowns and goggles. And a range of chemicals serve as ingredients in over-the-counter and prescription medications.

All segments of society have a role to play to help limit the spread of coronavirus and protect public health, especially those who are most vulnerable. The chemical industry can make a valuable contribution by applying prudent measures to prevent the spread of infection at our sites, while also maintaining production. We would be happy to provide additional information about our efforts to protect the health of our employees and communities while also continuing to produce essential materials to the American medical community and the American public during this trying time.

The Texas Chemical Council and its member companies stand ready to assist the State of Texas during these challenging times. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Hector L. Rivero
President & CEO