

August 11, 2021

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

Thank you again for your continued support of our Advisory Committee on Supply Chain Competitiveness (ACSCC), and for your leadership in addressing our national supply chain sourcing and congestion crisis, as co-lead of the Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force established under the President's Executive Order on Supply Chains.

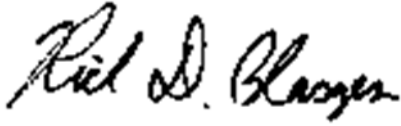
Rapid and uneven changes in cargo, production, and transport demand, spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, have put unprecedented strains on America's supply chains and on our ability to serve the American consumer, with substantial consequences likely for increased inflation, and job and economic growth. As our economy recovers, record-setting ordering and restocking demand, and carriers' and factories' responses to this demand, have overwhelmed our supply chains. Shortages of containers, truck chassis, railcars, truck drivers, and infrastructure capacity have substantially delayed and stalled exports, imports, and nationwide cargo movement. Meanwhile, pandemic surges in key sourcing countries have shut down crucial component and commodity production overseas, with major impacts on many U.S. production lines.

In the past, the Advisory Committee adopted several operational (short-term) and infrastructure-based (long-term) recommendations that remain relevant today. We have attached a compilation of these previous recommendations, updated as needed by current conditions, to support your work as the Task Force effort begins.

In the short term, the Committee recommends that the Department should support and facilitate activities that strengthen stakeholder communication, coordination, and collaboration to optimize their use of scarce equipment and infrastructure capacity, and that the Department should help to improve stakeholder awareness of domestic and near-shore sourcing alternatives that can better utilize available transport resources while shortening U.S. supply chains. In the long term, the Department should support measures that expand U.S. infrastructure capacity in a way that improves supply chain efficiency and resiliency, which will help the Nation be better prepared for similar crises in the future. The Committee urges the Department and the Administration to avoid any regulatory or legislative action that unnecessarily controls or impedes private sector efforts to resolve these crises.

**APPROVED BY ACSCC FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE
JULY 23, 2021**

Respectfully submitted,



Rick D. Blasgen
Advisor / Former President and CEO
Council of Supply Chain Management
Professionals
Chair, Advisory Committee on Supply Chain
Competitiveness



Rick Gabrielson
President
RS Gabrielson and Associates
Vice Chair, Advisory
Committee on Supply Chain
Competitiveness
Chair, Freight Movement Policy and
Infrastructure Subcommittee

ATTACHMENT: COVID-19 Supply Chain Disruption Crisis Recommendations

**APPROVED BY ACSCC FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE
JULY 23, 2021**

ATTACHMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUPPLY CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS
COVID-19 SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTION CRISIS RECOMMENDATIONS

AUGUST 11, 2021

- It is essential that the Administration allocate sufficient vaccines and resources to each U.S. port of entry state to ensure that its port workforce is fully vaccinated against COVID, to avoid freight flow and supply chain stoppages. This workforce must include domestic mariners, international mariners on vessels serving U.S. ports, longshore labor, truck drivers, warehouse workers, and other essential personnel crucial to cargo movement. While many of our front-line workers have been vaccinated, it is crucial that they remain a priority should additional vaccines be needed.
- Many U.S. industrial sectors remain immediately dependent on non-U.S. sources for critical commodities, components, and supplies needed to stay in operation. Key U.S. trading partners now face new COVID surges that have shut down crucial production centers and ports. Where appropriate, the Administration should work with these partners to help ensure that their production center and port workforce is fully vaccinated against COVID, in order to avoid U.S. industrial disruptions until alternate U.S. and non-U.S. sources can be found.
- The Department, in partnership with the private sector and participating agencies, should expedite its ability to share information with supply chain stakeholders on which production-dependent commodities, components, and supplies can be sourced from the U.S. and its territories, Canada, and Mexico.
- The Department, in partnership with other agencies, should support and, where appropriate, help facilitate voluntary information-sharing exchanges among supply chain stakeholders that facilitate their ability to locate available shipping containers, container chassis, railcars, and other transportation and logistics equipment crucial to goods movement and freight fluidity.
- The Department, in partnership with the private sector and participating agencies, should support the development of a voluntary, nationwide port and airport community system and an electronic information exchange standard for critical product flow tracking that will optimize and improve the resilience of U.S. supply chains, logistics, trade and competitiveness, and that facilitate the production and distribution of products that are critical to the health and safety of American citizens and the security of the United States.
- The Department, in partnership with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and individual states, should identify and help expedite transportation and information infrastructure projects needed to promote critical product production tracking, system analytics and sourcing shifts, and facility siting.

APPROVED BY ACSCC FREIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE
JULY 23, 2021

- The Department should work with DOT to remove obstacles to domestic goods movement, including but not limited to enabling under-21 Commercial Drivers License (CDL) drivers to handle interstate commerce; addressing driver retention, training, and workplace concerns within the industry; and enhancing “last mile” connectivity options that connect workers with new workplace locations.
- The Department should work with DOT and partner agencies to consider how to improve U.S. transport infrastructure connections with Mexico and Canada, to help shorten supply chains and promote domestic and near-shoring production shifts.
- The Department, together with the Department of Transportation and Customs and Border Protection, should consider how to improve the flow and speed of the export and import process and transport network access to U.S.-Canada-Mexico ports of entry.
- The Department should work with the White House and other Federal Departments to ensure that the Administration takes a coordinated, comprehensive, strategic, and multimodal approach to freight infrastructure investment and policy implementation under the American Jobs Plan and similar legislation. This approach is crucial in order to prioritize and achieve supply chain and transportation efficiency and resilience, to ensure sustained national economic prosperity.
- In particular, the Department should work with its Federal partners to ensure that the Administration’s infrastructure funding program is focused on the following supply chain resilience and performance improvement principles, in order to ensure smooth, end-to-end nationwide freight movement:
 - Achieving a holistic, comprehensive, fully interconnected, and national- and state-coordinated national freight movement system that emphasizes multimodal freight gateways and corridors, and a robust expansion into digital infrastructure.
 - Ensuring that Federal freight project investment is dedicated, sustainable, and flexible, to ensure that large-scale, cross-regional freight infrastructure projects are completed, while paying specific attention to improving points at which various transport modes connect in order to avoid bottlenecks.
 - Encouraging private sector engagement and participation in the nation’s freight infrastructure, to help move forward comprehensive, cross-regional freight infrastructure projects quickly and efficiently, and to promote data-sharing and system optimization across supply chain networks.