



**Philip K. Bell**  
President

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*21<sup>st</sup> Century Steelmakers*

Friday, March 20, 2020

The Vice President  
White House West Wing  
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

On behalf of the steel-producing members of the Steel Manufacturers Association (SMA), we appreciate the Trump administration's efforts to fight one of the worst public health crises in our nation's history.

As the largest steel industry trade association in the United States, our members account for almost 70 percent of domestic steelmaking capacity and directly or indirectly employ about two million people.

In recent days, a number of local and state governments have issued emergency orders, including restrictions on how and when companies can operate. Some have even called for the complete closure of businesses. I am writing to urge the Trump administration to provide consistent and coordinated guidance to local, state and federal authorities by formally designating the steel manufacturing sector as an "essential industry" when implementing any workforce reduction or shelter in place orders in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Our members have sought guidance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Both agencies already list steelmaking as a critical manufacturing sector. Also several states, including New Jersey and Pennsylvania, have deemed industrial manufacturing as essential. Additionally, the Trump administration and the Department of Commerce have reinforced the national security implications of steel through trade policy.

Our ability to safely operate and assist in the response to COVID-19 is critical. The role domestic steel production plays in the support of critical infrastructure needed for the delivery of public health services cannot be understated. Therefore we are calling on the administration to exempt steel companies and their employees from any workforce reduction, shelter in place or other orders that may be imposed by local, state or federal officials in response to COVID-19.

Designating steelmaking as an "essential industry," enables domestic steel producers to use their innovative products and expertise assist in the COVID-19 response. SMA members stand ready to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip K. Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Philip K. Bell