

Jay Timmons
President and CEO

June 8, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Jacob Sullivan
Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs
National Security Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Brian Deese
Director
National Economic Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Katherine Tai
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St. NW
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Ashish Jha
Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and
Counselor to the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Blinken, Secretary Raimondo, Ambassador Tai, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Deese and Dr. Jha:

On behalf of manufacturers of all sizes across the country, we greatly appreciate the administration's leadership to end the pandemic, to save lives and to secure our economic recovery. Manufacturers support clear, decisive actions to deliver COVID-19-related vaccines, tests, therapeutics and services to people around the world, including efforts to purchase and donate U.S.-manufactured vaccines to countries in need, to ensure equitable vaccine distribution around the world and to encourage other global leaders to bolster their own efforts to fight this pandemic. Such efforts remain crucial, as manufacturers are still dealing with the pandemic's broad economic effects. It is fueling inflation, disrupting manufacturing supply chains, extending our workforce crisis and delaying our domestic recovery.

American innovation has been fundamental in this fight, supporting the development and ramping up manufacturing of vaccines, therapeutics, personal protective equipment and other essential products at an unprecedented scale and scope. Intellectual property protections have made this possible, providing incentives for rapid development of these products and the legal certainty to support manufacturing partnerships, while also creating well-paying jobs for American workers and supporting U.S. technology leadership over other countries like China. And that innovation will be just as important in fighting not only new COVID-19 variants but also the next pandemic: this American ingenuity must be protected and strengthened, not weakened or ceded to our commercial rivals.

Unfortunately, a controversial proposal under discussion at the World Trade Organization would waive longstanding intellectual property protections for a potentially broad range of COVID-19 products and their supply chains, weakening innovation while doing nothing to address current manufacturing, supply chain and logistics challenges.

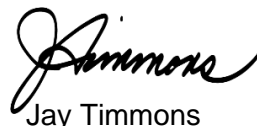
As manufacturing ramped up production to meet the high demand for COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics, it has become clear that the barrier to getting shots in arms is not intellectual property, but rather supply chain bottlenecks, logistical challenges and the ability of local health systems to deliver effective vaccines and treatments to the patients who need them most. Recent remarks by senior U.S. and global officials actively involved in global COVID-19 response underscore this point in statements that the primary challenge to global COVID-19 vaccination is not supply, but distribution and demand.¹

If the U.S. is to effectively lead global COVID-19 efforts, it must focus its efforts on real solutions that resolve these issues. Ahead of the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference, manufacturers strongly urge you and your administration to work with like-minded countries to drive international consensus and support for effective, practical initiatives that leverage increased trade to support pandemic response. WTO members have discussed a range of constructive initiatives, including the Trade in Health Initiative, the "zero-for-zero initiative" on pharmaceuticals and targeted efforts to address specific WTO-identified trade bottlenecks and promote stronger regulatory cooperation.

In contrast, manufacturers are strongly opposed to the WTO's proposed TRIPS waiver, which would directly harm manufacturers in the U.S. across a broad range of sectors by putting their current innovation at risk, while also undermining investment in innovative industries, putting jobs at risk, undermining future pandemic responses and weakening U.S. technology leadership.

Strong U.S. leadership at home and abroad remains central to both battling the pandemic and strengthening our manufacturing economy. Yet we cannot afford to waste time on narrow, divisive approaches that fail to address the most serious ongoing challenges. The NAM and its members stand ready to work with you and your agencies to advance solutions that will, once and for all, tackle this devastating pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Timmons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J".

Jay Timmons

¹ See White House, ["Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and HHS Public Health Officials,"](#) April 5, 2022; Thompson, Sylvia, ["WHO's Dr. Mike Ryan: 'Even if a new variant emerges, we should be alright,'"](#) Irish Times, Jan. 24, 2022; and Guarascio, Francesco and Jennifer Rigby, ["COVID vaccine supply for global programme outstrips demand for first time,"](#) Reuters, Feb. 23, 2022.