



April 9, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

As the Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) work to respond to the extraordinary economic fallout brought on by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) urges the Department to ensure economic relief is made available to advanced biofuel producers and biobased technology manufacturers.

While Americans are heeding the calls of local and state governments to stay home to stop the spread of COVID-19, the need for transportation fuel has understandably plummeted, dramatically disrupting the biofuels industry. Not only has this shrunk the market for motor fuel, it has led to a decrease in air travel, limiting growth opportunities for the development of sustainable aviation fuels from advanced and cellulosic feedstocks.

Given the impact the economic downturn has had on all biofuel technologies, we request that USDA ensures all advanced and cellulosic biofuels are eligible to receive assistance from the additional funds provided to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stabilization (CARES) Act.

In addition to providing economic assistance, USDA is in a unique position to illustrate the potential of the biobased economy in addressing the COVID-19. This virus has highlighted the impact air pollution has on human health and the need to increase the use of biofuels in the transportation sector to improve air quality.

Biobased manufacturing can also be a solution to making sure those on the ground fighting the pandemic have the protection they need. Demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) is currently outpacing supply. To ensure that we can adequately fight the virus, it is critical that doctors, nurses, first responders, and scientists developing potential cures have access to PPE.

Increasing production of renewable chemicals made from innovative biotechnologies and synthetic biology will help us meet the growing demand of PPE. These products can also be biodegradable or recyclable, which will significantly reduce the amount of waste. It will also increase the demand for biomass feedstocks as producers are faced with a downturn in commodity prices.

In addition to PPE, biobased products can help meet the growing need for testing products to track the virus and research cures. It can also help us meet the demand for sterilizing and cleaning products. In addition to ethanol producers, biotech companies are developing key ingredients that can help in the production of hand sanitizers. Green surface cleaners can meet the growing demand to sterilize surfaces in hospitals, public places, and homes. While enzyme developers are enhancing detergents that can increase cleaning efficacy even

in low temperature washing, circumventing the need for hot water and reducing the environmental footprint of the sterilization process.

As such, we urge the Department and the Administration to make greater investments in research, development and deployment of biobased products to tackle COVID-19. We would encourage USDA to use whatever authorities it has to bolster the biobased sector, including expedited distribution of loans under the Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program to build expedited capacity for biorefineries producing renewable chemicals, increasing promotion of the benefits biobased products can provide in addressing the COVID-19 under the BioPreferred Program and ensuring federal agencies are adhering to the program's procurement requirements.

BIO and its members look forward to working with USDA and the administration to ensure there is adequate support for sustainable fuels and the biobased economy to help address COVID-19 head on and help the economy rebound as the United States comes back online. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Batchelor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stephanie Batchelor

Vice President
Industrial and Environmental Section
Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)