June 3, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin  
Treasury Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

We urge you to defer excise tax payments for beer, wine, and distilled spirit manufacturers and importers through the end of 2020.

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused extensive damage to the American economy, businesses and workers. Americans across the country have been forced to self-isolate over the past several months, a situation that has closed retail establishments, tasting rooms, restaurants and bars, weakened consumer spending, and threatened the livelihood of small businesses. This decline in commerce has harmed alcohol manufacturers and importers, especially smaller breweries, distillers, and wineries.

Deferring excise tax payments will help these businesses receive much needed emergency liquidity and allow them to prioritize paying workers and meeting expenses over making tax payments. This is a modest step toward helping businesses, as these taxes will eventually be repaid.

Treasury has already utilized its legal authority to postpone excise taxes for the second quarter of 2020. This is also just one of many tax deadlines that the Trump administration has delayed in recognition of the economic damage caused by the virus.

As you consider enacting this deferral of tax payments, we urge you to ensure that any deferral is available equally to manufacturers and importers. There is no reason to exclude or limit importers given they face the same excise taxes as products manufactured in the U.S. and face the same economic challenges.

The Q2 excise tax deferment imposed burdensome requirements on importers by requiring “significant financial hardship,” which U.S. Customs and Border Protection defined as a loss of more than 40 percent in revenue. This is the wrong approach – excise tax deferral should be available equally to all alcohol manufacturers and importers.

Deferring excise tax payments for distillers, breweries and wineries through the end of the year is a simple step that will help manufacturers as they look to survive the damage caused by COVID-19.

It will provide liquidity for taxpayers and will build upon past actions taken by the Trump administration to mitigate the economic pain being felt by American workers and businesses.

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist  
President, Americans for Tax Reform  

Jim Martin  
Founder/Chairman, 60 Plus Association  

Saulius “Saul” Anuzis  
President, 60 Plus Association  

Marty Connors  
Leader, Alabama Center-Right Coalition  

Phil Kerpen  
President, American Commitment
Brent Wm. Gardner  
Chief Government Affairs Officer, Americans for Prosperity

Norm Singleton  
President, Campaign for Liberty

Ryan Ellis  
President, Center for a Free Economy

Andrew F. Quinlan  
President, Center for Freedom and Prosperity

Jeffrey Mazzella  
President, Center for Individual Freedom

Chuck Muth  
President, Citizen Outreach

Michelle Minton  
Senior Fellow, Competitive Enterprise Institute

Thomas Schatz  
President, Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

Rick Watson  
Chairman, Florida Center/Right Coalition

Owen Brennan  
President, Free California

Adam Brandon  
President, FreedomWorks

James Taylor  
President, Heartland Institute

Jon Caldara  
President, Independence Institute

Andrew Langer  
President, Institute for Liberty

Chris Ingstad  
President, Iowans for Tax Relief

Seton Motley  
President, Less Government

Doug McCullough  
Director, Lone Star Policy Institute

Paul D. Craney  
Spokesperson/Board Member, Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance

Jameson Taylor, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Policy, Mississippi Center for Public Policy

Tim Jones  
Chair, Missouri Center-Right Coalition  
Fmr. Speaker, Missouri House

Pete Sepp  
President, National Taxpayers Union

Stephen Stepanek  
Co-Chair, New Hampshire Center-right Coalition

Eli Lehrer  
President, R Street Institute

Bette Grande  
CEO, Roughrider Policy Center

David Williams  
President, Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Christian N. Braunlich  
President, Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy