



December 7, 2020  
The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
State Capitol  
Suite 1173  
Sacramento  
CA  
95814

Dear Governor Newsom

By way of introduction, the Natural Products Association (NPA) was founded in 1936 to promote and protect the unique values and shared interests of retailers and suppliers of natural nutritional foods and natural products including conventional foods, medical foods, dietary supplements, and foods for special dietary use. The NPA is a non-profit 501(c)(6) association whose mission is to advocate for the rights of consumers to have access to products that will maintain and improve their health, and for the rights of retailers and suppliers to sell these products. We are the oldest and largest trade association in the natural products industry representing over 700 members account for almost 10,000 retail, manufacturing, wholesale, and distribution locations of natural products, including foods, dietary supplements, homeopathic products, and health/beauty aids.

The natural products industry represents over 380,000 direct jobs, over \$16 billion in direct wages and almost \$15 billion in taxes each and every year. Many of the men and women who make up the natural products industry are the neighborhood small businesses that are vital to all local economies.

Today, much of California will go under the Regional Stay At Home Order in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. It is imperative that essential businesses such as health-food stores that provide nutritional supplements and other health and wellness products will continue to be allowed to remain open for business during this public health emergency.

On March 19, 2020, you issued Executive Order N-33-20 directing all residents immediately to heed current State public health directives to stay home, except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as the State Public Health Officer may designate as critical to protect health and well-being of all Californians. In accordance with that order, the State Public Health Officer designated:

*"workers for health manufacturing, including dietary supplements... retailers specializing in medical goods and supplies... and workers supporting groceries, pharmacies, convenience stores, and other retail that sells food or beverage products as essential business."*

This is accordance with the federal Department of Homeland Security's March 28 [guidance](#) identifying "workers at manufacturers including dietary supplements, commercial health products...".<sup>1</sup>

At a time when California is experiencing a spiked increase in new COVID-19 cases, it is important that we continue to reenforce the importance of health-first policies. Over the past year, we have learned a lot about the novel virus, COVID-19. The more research that has been invested into learning about those who contract the virus, the more we have seen underlying health issues have played a role in infection. For instance, vitamin D deficiency is common, affecting nearly half the population, with higher rates among people with darker skin or reduced sun exposure, including nursing home residents and health care workers.<sup>2</sup> This includes significant research pointing examining inadequate vitamin D levels and COVID-19. According to a recent study conducted by Dr. David Meltzer MD, Ph.D., from the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago, vitamin D status, based on deficiency levels and treatment plays a role in the risk of COVID-19 infection.<sup>3</sup>

At a time when there is a heightened focus on health and wellness, it's important that industry is available to provide the public with products that will help them maintain their health or supplement their diets to improve potentially deficient diets. It is our hope that you will continue to encourage the entire dietary supplement supply chain to remain open for business providing the public with the opportunities to support their health at this critical time.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter.



Daniel Fabricant, Ph.D.  
President & CEO  
Natural Products Association  
440 West 1st Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

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<sup>1</sup>Advisory Memorandum on Ensuring Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers Ability to Work During the COVID-19 Response

[https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Version\\_4.0\\_CISA\\_Guidance\\_on\\_Essential\\_Critical\\_Infrastructure\\_Workers\\_FINAL%20AUG%2018v3.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Version_4.0_CISA_Guidance_on_Essential_Critical_Infrastructure_Workers_FINAL%20AUG%2018v3.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Martineau AR, Jolliffe DA, Hooper RL, et al. Vitamin D supplementation to prevent acute respiratory tract infections: systematic review and meta-analysis of individual participant data. *BMJ*. 2017;356:i6583.

<sup>3</sup> Meltzer DO, Best TJ, Zhang H, Vokes T, Arora V, Solway J. Association of Vitamin D Status and Other Clinical Characteristics With COVID-19 Test Results. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2020;3(9):e2019722.