

Industry Groups Request Assistance from White House in Response to Carbon Dioxide Shortage

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In an [April 7 letter](#) to Vice President Mike Pence, groups including the Beer Institute, Brewers Association, National Pork Producers Council, North American Meat Institute, and National Cattlemen's Beef Association stated that the COVID-19 pandemic created a significant risk of a shortage in carbon dioxide (CO₂). In the letter, the groups requested assistance from the federal government to prevent a "substantial CO₂ shortage," which the industry groups noted could ultimately lead to a decrease in food and beverage supply.

Brewers and soft-drink makers use CO₂ for the carbonation of beer and soda, while meat producers use CO₂ to process, package, preserve, and ship their products. In [the letter to Vice President Mike Pence](#), the groups stated that COVID-19 has significantly affected overall demand and production of industrial manufacturing that leads to CO₂ capture. CO₂ is produced primarily as a byproduct of industrial manufacturing, including the production of ethanol. Ethanol producers are major providers of CO₂ to the food industry, as they capture gas as a byproduct of ethanol production when making renewable fuel. Due to the decrease in number of people driving during the pandemic, the market for ethanol has declined, and U.S. ethanol plants that sell carbon dioxide have slowed production.

In their request to the White House, the industry groups urged the Trump Administration to provide "temporary, emergency, federal assistance by providing federal incentives to industrial manufacturers to put manufacturing plants that results in CO₂ back into service." The industry groups stated that without stable sources of CO₂ across the nation, food and beverage manufacturers will be unable to operate at capacity, which will lead to shortages for consumers during the COVID-19 crisis.

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