



June 18, 2020

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures, on behalf of ISSA—The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association, I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on “Tax Relief to Support Workers and Families during the COVID-19 Recession.”

With more than 9,300 members, including distributors, manufacturers, manufacturer representatives, wholesalers, residential and commercial cleaning service providers, and associated service members, ISSA is the world's leading trade association for the cleaning industry. The association and the cleaning industry in general are committed to protecting the health and safety of the public through improved cleaning and disinfection practices and procedures.

Ensuring clean and safe spaces is one of most important topics facing workers and families as the country continues to reopen offices, restaurants, schools, hotels, salons, and other parts of society. This is why we would like to thank Representatives Darin LaHood and Stephanie Murphy for introducing H.R. 7079, the *Clean Start: Back to Work Tax Credit Act*. We believe this commonsense, bipartisan bill would ensure that businesses can provide safe and sanitary environments for their employees and customers as they begin to reopen and get back to work.

The cleaning community has always understood the value of clean and the impact our industry has on improving public health and the economy. As the COVID-19 pandemic grew, so did the awareness and demand for cleaning and disinfecting products as well as professional cleaning services. From the start of the outbreak, manufacturers have increased production of essential products and helped distribute these products where they were needed most, and cleaning professionals have been on the front line making sure spaces where essential workers have continued to operate have been properly cleaned and disinfected.

As the economy continues to reopen, we must ensure that businesses have the resources to invest in making sure their workers and customers come back to a safe and clean environment. It is critical that institutional facilities and companies in general significantly improve their cleaning and disinfection practices to reduce the further transmission of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, and to ensure worker and customer safety and confidence. Guidance issued by industry, the Centers for Disease Control, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and others call for increased cleaning frequencies and disinfection, all of which will significantly increase costs to businesses at a time when they can least afford it, but when they most need it.

There is significant research demonstrating the novel coronavirus can survive on surfaces for many days unless those surfaces are properly cleaned and disinfected. The combination of properly trained cleaning personnel and utilizing the correct cleaning products are critical in helping prevent the further spread of this virus as businesses reopen. Unfortunately, many businesses do not clean and disinfect properly or effectively because they lack the necessary expertise, supplies, or trained personnel to disinfect for coronavirus and other viruses that threaten human health.

The *Clean Start: Back to Work Tax Credit Act* would create a \$25,000 tax credit per location capped at \$250,000 per business entity to help businesses defray the unforeseen and increased cleaning costs associated with fighting the coronavirus. The credit would be temporary and could be used to help offset the costs of professional cleaning services, purchasing cleaning products and sanitary-related equipment, as well as training workers on proper cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Qualified expenses would also include personal protective equipment, which are critical to protecting employees and the public.

We estimate that as businesses reopen, costs associated with properly cleaning and disinfecting facilities will increase in at least two ways: additional labor and additional equipment and supply costs. For labor, typical cleaning expenses will increase approximately 50 percent. Regarding equipment, tools, and related cleaning materials and supplies, expenses will increase between 100 and 200 percent. These additional and unexpected expenses will be difficult for many businesses to shoulder as they attempt to reopen. These costs can be even higher for locations with more at-risk individuals or with specific cleaning needs such as nursing homes or hospitals.

While there are government guidelines, the demand for increased and improved cleaning protocols is largely being driven by the market. Consumers recently ranked frequent cleaning and disinfecting as the top (66 percent) measure that would make them more likely or more comfortable with visiting physical spaces. Similarly, 48 percent ranked requiring staff/employee training on hygienic protocols as the top measure. (International Council of Shopping Centers, May 8, 2020).

As COVID-19 continues to impact the life of every American, we strongly believe that the *Clean Start: Back to Work Tax Credit Act* is critical in helping businesses safeguard the health and safety of workers and customers to prevent additional outbreaks. ISSA looks forward to continuing to work with members of the House and Senate to pass a bipartisan stimulus package that includes the *Clean Start: Back to Work Tax Credit Act*. This will help the country get safely back to work. Thank you again for your consideration and the opportunity to submit this testimony today.

Sincerely,



John H. Barrett
Executive Director ISSA—The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association