



LETTER FROM OUR CEO

As the Covid 19 public health crisis continues to overwhelm our healthcare systems, devastate our communities, and transform the economy, we hope all of you are well and would like to extend our condolences to all who have been directly impacted by the illness or loss of a family member or friend as a result of the pandemic. We would also like to send our best wishes to each one of you and your loved ones to stay safe and healthy during these unprecedented times.

Amid this crisis, we remain committed to our members and are continuing to work hard on your behalf. While we will face incredible hardship and uncertainty over the next few months and beyond, this challenging time can prove to be both a learning experience and an opportunity to reimagine our supply chain and business practices to be prepared for the next disaster.

In 2015, Bill Gates hosted a Ted Talk where he explained the inevitability of a pandemic when he said, "If anything kills over 10 million people in the next few decades, it's most likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war". He then goes on to explain the degree to which the United States and the world is completely unprepared for such an event. Bill Gates was not the only one who warned of this as many doctors, scientists, economists, and scholars around the world have raised alarms in the past.

I bring this up not to look back at what we have done wrong, but to make a comparison to the climate change crisis that has been consistently ignored by many world leaders and business leaders. We have an opportunity to use this as a lesson to apply sustainable purchasing practices to shape a safer and greener future. We will emerge strong and hopeful for the future, but we must also emerge wiser and more determined to consistently have the long game in mind in every decision we make. Listed below are three ways by which you can feel you are doing just that, and how you can respond from a business perspective:

1. **Resolve Short Term Issues:** This crisis has had an immediate impact on every business in some way or another and it is important to weather the storm each day and react to the evolving daily changes. Address the immediate challenges to your workforce, customers, finances, technology, and partners.
2. **Rethink Your Business Practices:** We are truly in uncharted waters and the economic impact will be lasting. Reimagine the new normal. Ask yourself how this crisis will directly affect your business in the long term. How will it affect your supply chain? How will it affect your customers? Your Competitors? Your employees? The regulatory practices?
3. **Reform:** After you think about the immediate challenges and long-term business practices, think about what regulatory changes might go into place and what you can do to be part of the solution. What policies and practices will you change? How can you learn from this and implement better practices for a future disaster? How can you play a role in preventing another disaster?

I look forward to virtually connecting with you on May 18th -May 20th and again, I hope that you and your loved ones stay safe during this crisis.

Donna L. Westerman
SPLC Chief Executive Officer