

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1407

December 14, 2021

Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Members of the Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force:

We write to you expressing deep urgency regarding the port congestion and shipping delays that are wreaking havoc on our constituents and jeopardizing businesses all across the Midwest. We have heard countless stories and fielded requests from small and medium sized businesses that have led us to inquire about your actions to minimize harm resulting from this crisis and your plans to address it with urgency.

The businesses located in Indiana are particularly impacted by these supply chain barriers, most urgently at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Some have products stuck in container ships on the water, some have containers stacked in inaccessible environments, and some cannot find proper storage space or available methods for transport. The combination of these factors has led to an incredibly strenuous environment for our constituents, one that they cannot withstand much longer. We must identify measures to increase productivity, unkink the chain, and find ways to be efficient before even more businesses go under.

We appreciate the efforts undertaken to address supply chain challenges such as the Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force (Task Force). Unfortunately, the Task Force has failed to deliver meaningful and immediate relief. While the installation of the Port Envoy could achieve beneficial changes, the initiative is too narrow and fails to address the entirety of port congestion, not just the concentration evident at Los Angeles and Long Beach. Further, warehouse space and chassis availability continue to represent a significant hurdle in alleviating congestion. The recent announcement to open the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports for 24/7 operation addresses working hours, but not the fundamental issue of available chassis and escalating costs passed down to consumers and incurred by importers struggling to manage inventory and secure inputs.

Our constituents are simply asking for action that leads to results, which so far has not occurred in a meaningful way. In that vein, we are requesting written responses to a series of questions below regarding tangible action and improvements to port congestion and supply chain disruptions.

1. What does the Task Force identify as the root cause or causes for this current crisis at our nation's ports?
2. What actions has the Task Force taken to mitigate or eliminate supply chain issues that prevent transfer of products off container ships and on to trucks or rail cars?
3. What are the Task Force and the Administration doing to encourage greater automation and efficiency at our nation's major ports, which are noted to be some of the most inefficient in the world?

4. Are there other parts of our supply chain that could be operating more efficiently, and what are the relevant agencies in the Task Force doing to promote such efficiency?
5. Does the Task Force and their related agencies require additional authorities from Congress to address port congestion and shipping delays? If so, please detail these authorities.
6. Are there any solutions or mitigating relief measures pertaining to the supply chain crisis that the agency members of the Task Force would like to implement but cannot because they are outside of their scope and authority?
7. Has the Task Force or the Administration consulted with military logistics experts to identify creative solutions to solving port congestion and supply chain issues?
8. Has the Task Force or the Administration consulted with private entities focused on business solutions to identify ways to solve port congestion and supply chain issues?
9. Why does the American public not have access to timely updates on what the federal government is doing to improve the pressing port congestion issues?
10. Would the American people benefit from increased transparency through systematic reporting on supply chain disruptions?
11. What analysis has been conducted to determine the geographical implications to the Midwest caused by decisions made on coasts where the majority of the port-related disruption has taken place?
12. Is the Task Force currently equipped to develop and implement a comprehensive set of solutions that will execute immediate results? If not, please identify what barriers exist in the Task Force's mission.
13. Is there a single point of authority and accountability within the federal government for dealing with the current supply chain crisis and, if so, who is it?
14. Has the Task Force or the Administration considered the impact that the federal vaccine mandate policies and requirements on cross-border truck drivers may have on port congestion and shipping delays?

We look forward to your thorough answers to these questions, which we will share with our constituents in need.

Sincerely,



Todd Young
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Mr. John Porcari
Mr. Brian Deese