

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

Statement on the Defense Production Act of 1950

April 3, 2020

America is at war against an invisible enemy. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the virus has led to wartime profiteering by unscrupulous brokers, distributors, and other intermediaries operating in secondary markets. This wartime profiteering is leading to hoarding and soaring prices for personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks, gloves, and N95 respirators, all of which are needed to protect American citizens, including our heroic health care professionals, battling on the front lines.

The ability of wartime profiteers to purchase domestic supplies of scarce and critical materials, hoard them while they engage in profiteering and speculation, and then export them can generate foreign demand, and lead to price gouging. This conduct denies our country and our people the materials they need to win the war against the virus.

Wartime profiteers may include a large army of speculators and warehouse operators operating in the dark corners of our markets. They may also include some well-established PPE distributors with the ability to unscrupulously divert PPE inventories from domestic customers, such as hospitals and State governments, to foreign purchasers willing to pay significant premiums.

Today's order is another step in our ongoing fight to prevent hoarding, price gouging, and profiteering by preventing the harmful export of critically needed PPE. It will help ensure that needed PPE is kept in our country and gets to where it is needed to defeat the virus.

Nothing in this order will interfere with the ability of PPE manufacturers to export when doing so is consistent with United States policy and in the national interest of the United States.

Categories: Statements by the President : Defense Production Act of 1950.

Subjects: Defense Production Act of 1950, executive authorities; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic protection efforts; Health and medical care : Medical equipment and supplies.

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