

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to urge you to designate a temporary supply chain coordinator, or “czar,” to address problems that have plagued our supply chain and continue to wreak havoc in certain sectors of the U.S. economy. The creation of this position at the White House can help resolve supply chain gridlock that has led to product shortages and higher prices for all American consumers, and that has threatened critical industries like agriculture, healthcare, and defense.

Market forces, as well as private and public investment in U.S. supply chain infrastructure, will undoubtedly boost the long-term capacity and resiliency of the supply chain. Additionally, we support the work of the Supply Chain Disruptions Task Force and look forward to reading the report it is expected to deliver in early 2022. However, many experts and many of our constituents do not believe that, barring a significant economic slowdown, the current gridlock in the supply chain will ease without a more robust response. This response should be coordinated by the White House, as its work cuts across multiple agencies and commissions, including the Departments of Transportation, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, and the Federal Maritime Commission.

We propose the designation of a “Supply Chain Czar” within the Executive Office of the President as the single point of accountability on supply chain issues for as long as the current gridlock persists. The designee’s purpose would be to view the U.S. supply chain holistically, devise solutions to help improve efficiency and coordinate with the various supply chain stakeholders to implement these solutions. The Czar would partner with entities across all the critical supply chain nodes to maintain regular and open communications, as well as employ supply chain experts to suggest ways to alleviate congestion that may not be apparent if the focus is primarily on one node in the system, such as the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

While the appointment of Port Envoy John D. Porcari was a step in the right direction, the role’s scope is too narrow as the supply chain is a complex system and breakdowns have a ripple effect.

To this point, the major initiatives announced by the Port Envoy have been positive developments but are not comprehensive. For example, by the time the Administration announced the opening of the Port of Los Angeles 24/7, the primary chokepoints in the supply chain had moved elsewhere.

The Czar would look ahead to where the problems will be next, not just where they are today, and could encourage cooperation by publicly highlighting the points of the supply chain that are not working, pressuring stakeholders to work for the system, and not against it.

We respectfully request that the White House act promptly and decisively to help ease near-term supply chain congestion for the good of American consumers, businesses, our economy, and critical infrastructure, by designating a high-level Czar. Coordination must be led by the highest levels of government to ensure that our supply chains are working for the people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Panetta', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jodey C. Arrington', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jodey C. Arrington
Member of Congress