August 24, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders Schumer, McCarthy, and McConnell:

The National Restaurant Association has just completed a national survey of customers to assess the state of the industry amid the rise of the delta variant of the coronavirus. We concluded that a majority of consumers have changed their dining behavior in a manner that is beginning to put acute pressure back on the restaurant industry. This development comes on top of food and labor costs that are increasing at their fastest pace in several years, continued indoor capacity limits in 11 states, and crushing long-term debt loads for countless restaurant owners.

Specifically, our survey finds that:

- Nineteen percent of adults have stopped going out to restaurants, while 9% cancelled existing plans to go out to a restaurant in recent weeks. For an industry that requires a "full house" every evening to make a profit, this is a dangerous trend.

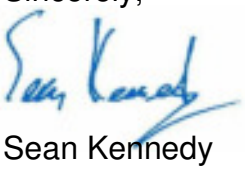
- Thirty-seven percent of adults say they ordered takeout or delivery instead of going out to a restaurant, while 19% say they chose to sit outside instead of inside when going out to a restaurant. These changes indicate declining consumer confidence that will make it more difficult for most restaurant owners to maintain their delicate financial stability.

The Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF) has been a lifeline for many owners, but as you are well aware, it was only able to fund roughly one in three applications – leaving 177,000 restaurants in communities across the country without desperately needed stability. The rise of coronavirus variants like delta threatens to push these restaurants closer to permanent closure. The RRF was funded as emergency spending to preserve an industry uniquely vulnerable to the government response to the pandemic. It has proven its effectiveness in every state, saving restaurants, workers, and the suppliers who depend on their business.

The National Restaurant Association and the state restaurant association partners below urge Congress to complete the mission of the RRF and provide adequate funds to replenish the program and offer relief for the 177,000 applications still pending. The small gains that our industry has made toward financial security are in danger of being wiped out, dashing the hopes of communities, entrepreneurs, and consumers nationwide.

Thank you for your continued leadership on behalf of restaurants in your home towns and across the country.

Sincerely,



Sean Kennedy
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs

Alabama Restaurant & Hospitality Association
Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant & Retailers Association
Arizona Restaurant Association
Arkansas Hospitality Association
California Restaurant Association
Colorado Restaurant Association
Connecticut Restaurant Association
Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington
Delaware Restaurant Association
Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association
Georgia Restaurant Association
Hawaii Restaurant Association
Idaho Lodging & Restaurant Association
Illinois Restaurant Association
Indiana Restaurant & Lodging Association
Iowa Restaurant Association
Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association
Kentucky Restaurant Association
Louisiana Restaurant Association
Hospitality Maine
Restaurant Association of Maryland
Massachusetts Restaurant Association
Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association
Hospitality Minnesota
Mississippi Hospitality & Restaurant Association
Missouri Restaurant Association
Montana Restaurant Association
Nebraska Restaurant Association
Nevada Restaurant Association
New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association
New Jersey Restaurant & Hospitality Association
New Mexico Restaurant Association
New York State Restaurant Association
North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association
North Dakota Hospitality Association
Ohio Restaurant Association
Oklahoma Restaurant Association
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association
Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association
Puerto Rico Restaurant Association
Rhode Island Hospitality Association
South Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association
Hospitality Tennessee
Texas Restaurant Association
Utah Restaurant Association
Vermont Chamber of Commerce
Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association
Washington Hospitality Association

West Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association Wyoming Lodging & Restaurant Association
Wisconsin Restaurant Association