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Nadhim Zahawi MP
Minister for Business and Industry
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

23rd March 2020

Dear Minister,

Re: Availability of ethanol.

I write on behalf of the British Coatings Federation (who represent printing ink manufacturers across the UK and Europe) and 9 other trade bodies from the UK printing industry supply chain for food packaging.

At the present time, we understand important resources are being directed to sectors identified as being crucial to the fight against COVID-19. Part of that response seems to be that governments are diverting supplies of ethanol, n-propanol and other relevant raw materials to the manufacture of sanitary, health and pharmaceutical applications, such as hand sanitiser.

While this is understandable, we have serious concerns at the effect this may have on industry's ability to produce other important materials - in our case specifically printing inks for flexible food packaging, a supply chain that is also under significant strain just now.

Attached is a supply chain statement urging the UK Government to take a balanced approach to this issue, to ensure the necessary supplies of ethanol and other relevant raw materials are maintained for the ink and printing industries so they can fulfil their role in producing food and other essential packaging throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As things stand, members are reporting that things will come to a head within a matter of weeks, not least because of increased demand for food and other products, and hence increased packaging.

Whilst we have raised the issue with officials, who have been understanding, and are feeding in our views, our members feel the issue is of such importance that we wanted to raise it at the most senior level.

We don't just want to be seen to be complaining and are ready and willing to work with your Department to come up with solutions that might resolve this matter in the most effective way possible for the country.

If you or your officials would like to discuss this matter further, please do contact me directly on behalf of the group.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Bowtell

CEO, British Coatings Federation

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