



March 26, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

We appreciate your leadership in supporting America's businesses as the nation combats the COVID-19 pandemic.

As both state and local governments and businesses across the country work to slow the spread of the coronavirus, it remains important that public accounting be categorized as a legally mandated essential service by the Treasury and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency. Many state governors have issued shelter-in-place orders, and in doing so they have included accounting as an essential service. We ask that the federal government do the same as the public accounting profession provides vital services that are critical to the financial markets and taxpayers.

The public accounting profession provides essential services in the following ways:

- Banks and other lenders rely on current financial statements and other information when issuing loans or reviewing financial restructuring requests. As businesses seek assistance and relief in addressing the current pandemic, it is necessary that CPAs be able to provide the necessary information to businesses that seek to address their financial needs.
- Although this year's April 15 federal tax filing deadline has been postponed until July 15<sup>th</sup>, just as you are, we are encouraging CPAs who have clients who will be receiving tax refunds to file now to help the economy. Sixty percent of all taxpayers use a tax practitioner to advise and prepare their returns, and it is essential that they are able to continue to assist their clients during this time if possible and safe to do so.
- Businesses depend on public accountants to provide regulatory compliance reporting, implementation and monitoring.
- Public accounting professionals handle critical and sensitive information which requires robust cybersecurity systems. Although the largest companies often operate in paperless systems with secure remote access, many small and midsize businesses use paper documents. Even if all these documents could be digitally transmitted, cybersecurity remains a concern. Public accounting firms have office IT systems in place for managing and protecting consumers' data.
- CPAs also help organizations, including government agencies, with the design and implementation of effective cybersecurity controls and activities. It is important that they can continue to provide these services in order to protect critical systems.

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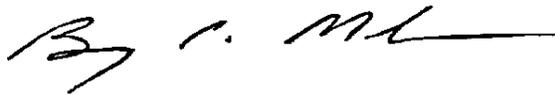
- Millions of businesses are facing difficult decisions due to the major disruption caused by COVID-19. More than ever, business owners will rely on their CPAs to provide analysis and advice that allows them to make vital decisions, meet their contractual obligations, pay their employees and, ultimately, stay in business.

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The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) is the world's largest member association representing the CPA profession, with more than 429,000 members in the United States and worldwide, and a history of serving the public interest since 1887. AICPA members represent many areas of practice, including business and industry, public practice, government, education and consulting. The AICPA sets ethical standards for its members and U.S. auditing standards for private companies, nonprofit organizations, federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination, offers specialized credentials, builds the pipeline of future talent and drives professional competency development to advance the vitality, relevance and quality of the profession.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry C. Melancon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Barry C. Melancon, CPA, CGMA  
President & CEO

Cc: Christopher C. Kerbs, Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency