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Pivoting Production to Meet the Challenges of a Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant challenges, but the manufacturing industry has remained resilient. Many MACNY member companies have met these challenges head on, learning to retool to produce Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and/or other medical supplies to improve the safety of New York frontline workers and the public. They also have instituted a long list of operating enhancements to mitigate any workplace risks associated with the spread of the virus.

The proposed Medical Supplies Act, which would prioritize buying American-made PPE and medical supplies, would help create and retain local jobs while ensuring the dependability of the manufacturing sector.

MACNY recently surveyed our members on the Medical Supplies Act. The survey found that while not all member companies would directly benefit from the policy, the vast majority of our companies strongly support and promote Buy-American policies that would help retain New York jobs. We know that when the pandemic began many hardworking and dedicated manufacturers responded quickly and pivoted their production to meet the demand of necessary goods. For example, Tessy Plastics started making COVID-19 testing kits, Cascade switched from making lacrosse helmets to face shields for the medical community, and Feldmeier Equipment began making tanks for the development of certain vaccines. Armoured One began producing optical grade face shields, and Healthway has been meeting worldwide demand for its air purifiers. There are many more companies with similar stories in Central New York and throughout the state.

New York will need to be prepared for what could likely be a near constant demand for PPE and other supplies, as New York continues reopening the economy. Our manufacturers are ready and willing to meet this demand.

The Medical Supplies Act would prioritize buying local and provide companies statewide with incentives to help them increase the production of such essential goods. It also would align with President Biden's executive order that aims to promote Buy-American policies and boost U.S. manufacturing through the federal procurement process. The executive order directs agencies to strengthen requirements about purchasing products and services from U.S. workers and businesses.

For more information on these measures, please email me directly at tiffanylatinog@macny.org.