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Rt Hon Alok Sharma
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

CC:
Nadhim Zahawi MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary
Jasmine Mitchell, Private Secretary
Terence Boniface, Assistant Director – Electronics and Machinery

20th March 2020

Dear Rt Hon Alok Sharma,

As measures to fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus become more restricting I am writing to draw your attention to the importance of ensuring that everyone in this country can continue to rely on a safe supply of electricity and use of their electrical equipment and appliances.

This is of critical importance for hospitals and utilities but also of major importance for transport, factories, warehouses, supermarkets, businesses and homes. The list goes on and I don't need to emphasise the importance of electricity in our lives.

In your published list of Key Workers you mentioned Utility Workers and this must include electricians and electrical engineers who are on the front line ensuring continuity of supply and making sure installed electrical items continue to function. It is therefore imperative that these Key Workers have access to the materials, components and spare and replacement parts to maintain electrical systems and devices. For this we need to assure a consistent and reliable supply of electro-technical products

The main purpose of my letter is therefore to ask you to ensure that Electrical Wholesale outlets remain open for business throughout this Corona virus crisis. As the 'specialist supermarkets' of the electrician they are the vital link in the supply chain between manufacturers of electro-technical products and the qualified electricians who install them.

We have been contacted by several of our members expressing concern, that their customers some of whom are carrying out work in hospitals, might not be able to get components for essential repairs, including components used to keep ventilators and ventilation equipment working.

The Electrical Distributors' Association (EDA) represents 75-80% of the UK's electrical wholesalers (246 businesses who have almost 2,000 outlets throughout the UK with expert technical staff and fleets of vehicles), who can continue to assure the supply of essential electro-technical products to front-line Key Workers.

This letter is signed by the Board of the EDA. The EDA board is totally representative of our sector with each board member having direct communication links with every single business and branch, from the largest, with a turnover of £1.4 billion and 375 outlets, to the smallest wholesaler with just one.

ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS' ASSOCIATION

Rotherwick House, 3 Thomas More Street, St Katharine's and Wapping, London E1W 1Z

T: 020 3141 7350 F: 020 7602 0613 E: info@eda.org.uk training@eda.org.uk W: www.eda.org.uk

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This request is also supported by the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA). Their CEO, Steve Bratt, would like to add his name to the letter as he says it is important to ECA members that the merchants stay open.

We understand that you will be very busy at the critical time but if you would like to discuss this further we would be happy to organise a representative group to meet with you. Otherwise, we look forward to receiving written assurances from you that electrical wholesalers can continue to trade to provide products and service to Key Workers making them in turn, Key Workers.

Yours sincerely on behalf of the EDA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Fitzsimons'.

Margaret Fitzsimons
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Ashworth'.

Chris Ashworth,
Group Operations Director, CEF,
EDA President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Lacey'.

Charlie Lacey,
MD, Stearn Electric Company,
EDA Vice-President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Edgar Aponte'.

Edgar Aponte, CEO, Rexel UK, Ltd

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Simon Barks,
MD, BEMCO (representing ANEW – Buying Group)

Simon Booth,
MD, ETC Electrical Supplies (representing IBA – Buying Group)

Andy Johnson,
MD, LEW Electrical Distributors (representing AWEBB – Buying Group)

Dan Poole,
Director, Phase Electrical Distributors Ltd (representing Fegime UK – Buying Group)

Glyn Prestwood,
Commercial Director, Edmundson Electrical Ltd

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