

November 14, 2001

The United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

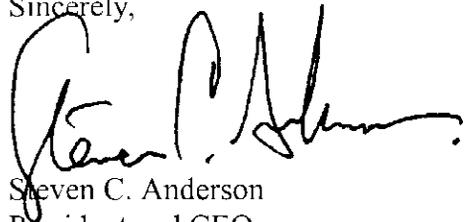
On behalf of the National Restaurant Association, the leading trade group for the nation's 844,000 restaurant locations, we urge you to cosponsor S. 1499, the American Small Business Emergency Relief and Recovery Act of 2001.

S. 1499 would address both emergency relief needed in the aftermath of the September 11 tragedies, as well as the magnified credit crunch caused by the economic downturn and the uncertain economic outlook facing our nation. In October 2001, eating and drinking places cut 42,000 jobs, which followed a 43,000 job reduction in September (seasonally-adjusted). This is the worst employment performance in the industry for this two month period since records have been kept.

The purpose of S. 1499 is to help small businesses meet their payments on existing debts, finance their businesses and maintain jobs in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks by strengthening and expanding access to the Small Business Administration's loan programs and management counseling. With 11.3 million employees, the restaurant industry is our nation's largest employer outside of government. Ninety-two percent of restaurants in the United States have fewer than 50 employees.

The National Restaurant Association applauds Senator John Kerry and Senator Kit Bond for introducing this bipartisan legislation and we ask that you consider cosponsoring S. 1499.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Anderson
President and CEO



Lee Culpepper
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy