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KIM C. CORDOVA
President

March 17, 2020

KEVIN R. SCHNEIDER
Secretary-Treasurer

Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Bldg
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

I write to you as the President of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, a union which represents more than 23,000 members and employees who are now on the front lines of the COVID-19 emergency. First, let me thank you on their behalf for your prompt recognition of this emergency circumstance, and the recent Colorado HELP Rules issued at your direction by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. As you know, Colorado's grocery workers, food processing employees, and healthcare professionals are on the front lines of our joint response to this public health crisis. Our food supply system, from processing to the stores themselves, have been placed under tremendous strain, and is a critical component of our dealing effectively with these unforeseen events. Our members, employees at King Soopers, City Market, Safeway, and Albertson's grocery stores, together with food processors and manufacturers, such as JBS and Mission Foods, as well as thousands of Kaiser Permanente healthcare professionals, have worked tirelessly to protect the general public and ensure a consistent supply of food and critical merchandise in these difficult times.

Our membership is uniquely exposed to the Coronavirus because of their essential work. This is particularly true because, in servicing the public, our members cannot self-distance as recommended by the CDC. And, additionally, many of our members do not receive employer health coverage during the first year of their employment. Unfortunately, our members have often not been provided critical personal protective equipment, including gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, and appropriate cleaning supplies. Moreover, regulations issued to date, while an excellent first step, fail to fully protect both our members – and by extension the general public – in ensuring these and other critical needs are safely met by employers. A number of the employers we work with, including the major grocers, have asserted that the Emergency Regulations issued to date do not cover the bulk of our members. With members of the public essentially confined to shopping for food and essential household products either online or at the grocery stores, failure to address these deficiencies may present a substantial risk to the public at large. Thus, on behalf of our members – I strongly urge you to direct the appropriate agencies to promulgate further emergency regulations which designate our workers and members as First Responders and protects them as follows:

- Require covered employers to provide appropriate gloves and masks, and other personal protective equipment as necessary to carry out their essential tasks.
- Require covered employers to ensure that adequate supplies of hand sanitizer and soap are available at all grocery check stands, store entrances, and departments within grocery retail establishments.
- Require covered employers to ensure that adequate supplies of hand sanitizer and soap are available throughout facilities where food processing and manufacturing operations are performed.

- Require covered employers to ensure that adequate supplies of hand sanitizer and soap are available throughout health care facilities for use by employees and the visiting public.
- Direct that grocery stores statewide be closed to the general public at least from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. during the length of this crisis so that the stores can be properly sanitized and restocked.
- Direct that grocery stores statewide establish and enforce reasonable limits on customers who may access the stores at any given time to ensure compliance with applicable safety and fire codes.
- Temporarily supersede and suspend municipal and county ordinances banning single-use grocery bags to lessen the probable spread of the virus through reusable grocery bags.
- Designate limited, discrete store hours for higher-risk individuals, based on the most-recent CDC guidelines.
- Require employers to accommodate employees who fall within the higher-risk population, as defined by the most-recent CDC guidelines, with lower-exposure work assignments.
- Consider posting law enforcement within grocery and healthcare facilities to ensure the continued maintenance of public order.
- Issue a further emergency labor regulation requiring covered employers who provide health insurance to continue premium payments regardless of hours worked by the employee, and suspending minimum coverage requirements such as length of service.
- Issue a further emergency regulation requiring covered employers to provide two-weeks of paid leave to any employee who is unable to work either because he or she has been diagnosed with or has a suspected case of COVID-19, or has been told to self-quarantine by a healthcare professional or by their employer. Additionally, this regulation should extend the above coverage to employees caring for a family member or loved one diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Issue a further emergency regulation directing that these critical employees receive, in addition to their normal wages, hazard pay no less than twenty-five percent (25%) of their base salary, solely during the course of this health emergency.

These are perilous and challenging times. We can assure you that our members stand shoulder to shoulder with you and all Coloradans and Americans in successfully combatting the Covid-19 virus and ensuring that we prevail in our efforts to limit the virus' spread.

I look forward to working collaboratively with you. I am at your disposal if you wish to discuss any of these items further.

Sincerely,



Kim C. Cordova
UFCW Local 7 Union President
UFCW International Vice President

cc: Lisa Kaufmann