



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UFCW LOCAL 7: OSHA FAILS TO HOLD JBS RESPONSIBLE  
FOR FAILED PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

*President Kim Cordova Responds to Measly \$15,615 Fine on JBS After Seven Months of the Pandemic, Seven Deaths, and Countless Illnesses.*

**DENVER** – Today, UFCW Local 7, that represents more than 3,000 workers at JBS Greeley plant, responded to the \$15,615 fine on JBS Foods, Inc. in Greeley, CO, for insufficient protection of its workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This fine from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) comes seven months, and seven deaths, too late.

**Kim Cordova, President of UFCW Local 7 issued the following statement:**

"A \$15,000 'penalty' from OSHA is nothing to a large company like JBS. In fact, it only incentivizes the company to continue endangering its employees. The government has officially failed our members, the more than 3,000 workers at JBS Greeley, who have protected the food supply chain while our communities quarantined during the pandemic. It is immoral and unethical, but in the current Administration, unfortunately not illegal, that OSHA waited seven months to investigate the unsafe working conditions that led to this deadly outbreak. Because of this failure, JBS Greeley is the site of the most meat processing plant worker deaths in the nation due to Covid-19. "Many of our members, including the families of the deceased, are still struggling to overcome the devastating consequences from JBS' inaction and negligence. The families of our members who died are currently overwhelmed, not only with insurmountable grief, but also the financial hardship of growing medical bills due to JBS' slow and inadequate response.

"OSHA obviously cannot interview the dead, but could have at least spoken to the families of the dead, their co-workers, and community members who witnessed our members' plight firsthand. Even though our Union provided mountains of evidence and names of willing witnesses, OSHA reached out to very few, with the excuse of 'capacity issues.'

“Our workers did not stop when our country did, and for that they are Essential Heroes. They were left unprotected by our government and by JBS, a company that cared more about profits than the lives of those that make those profits possible.

“The Union will not give up our fight for better conditions for our members working in the plant, for our members still struggling to recover physically and financially from this virus, and for the families of those we lost.

"Our members share a common goal with JBS, federal, state and local authorities: to ensure that the plant continues to function to protect the food supply chain and to protect jobs, but it must be done in a way that protects the workers so no one else has to get sick or die. That is why we continue to demand verifiable, enforceable safety laws from OSHA, affordable health care in case anyone else gets sick, and hazard pay for workers during this pandemic. In addition, we call for steeper penalties for negligent companies instead of the continued attempts from our government officials to shield them from liability.”

**UFCW Local 7 continues to demand specific health and safety actions necessary to protect these essential workers and the nation’s food supply chain:**

1. Mandate meatpacking companies to provide the highest level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) through access to the federal stockpile.
2. Ensure daily testing of workers and their communities.
3. Provide paid sick and family leave.
4. Ensure workers have access to quality and affordable health care, that includes long-term hospital coverage.
5. Mandate enforceable federal safety standards.
6. Mandate enforceable strong health CDC guidelines.
7. Ensure constant monitoring by federal inspectors to enforce safety standards.
8. Strengthen whistleblower laws for workers.
9. Protect workers’ health and safety by ensuring they have access to Union representation.
10. All workers receive a death benefit.
11. Mandate slower line speeds.
12. Ensure safe social distancing.

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*Local 7, the largest Union in Colorado is affiliated with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union which represents over 1.3 million workers in the United States and Canada, and is one of the largest private sector Unions in North America. UFCW members work in a wide range of industries, including retail food, food processing, agriculture, retail sales, and health care.*