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UFCW LOCAL 7 RESPONDS TO JBS USA'S COVID-19 VACCINE INCENTIVE BONUS, HIGHLIGHTING FAILURES

While JBS Boasts a One-Time Bonus To All Employees Who Get Vaccinated, Local 7 Demands More Action To Protect Workers

DENVER – Today, UFCW Local 7 called out JBS' new \$100 incentive program to U.S. team members willing to take the COVID-19 vaccine, calling it “not enough.” While JBS boasts about this new program, the company has yet to address the unilateral withdrawal of their \$4 per hour Hazard Pay for our 3,000 Essential Workers at the Greeley plant, the 32% increase in our member's healthcare costs, and the lack of social distancing on the production lines due to high line speed. Additionally, it has yet to provide daily, on-site testing or appropriate levels of PPE to fully protect our UFCW Local 7 members.

Since the start of the pandemic, there have been six deaths due to COVID spread at the Greeley plant, and 446 positive COVID-19 cases, including 32 cases alone this month. As the pandemic continues to ravage Colorado, we continue to fight for workplace safety for all of our members.

Kim Cordova, President of UFCW Local 7, which represents more than 25,000 workers in Colorado and Wyoming, 3,000 of which are Essential Workers at the JBS Greeley meatpacking plant, issued the following statement:

“Essential Workers deserve to get paid for their sacrifice working every day in a deadly pandemic, which translates to Hazard Pay and affordable quality healthcare. While we should all be doing everything we can to encourage our members to get the COVID-19 vaccine, this new incentive program is not enough and does nothing to right the wrongs experienced by our members who have worked at JBS for the last 10 months, putting their lives at risk to keep the country fed.

“Today's announcement is another attempt to distract from the company's failure to protect its workers. Unfortunately, JBS did not do anything to protect our six members who got COVID from the plant and are now dead. As the virus becomes more contagious, and therefore more dangerous, a one-time incentive bonus to get the vaccine will not make up for the lives lost and lives ruined by this terrible virus, or mitigate what JBS owes to its employees.

“As we come upon a year since the start of the pandemic, Local 7 continues to call on JBS to address these persisting demands from our members and do more to protect them at work. This includes addressing the unfair 32% increase in healthcare costs, restoring the rescinded \$4 per hour Hazard Pay, slowing down the production line so that better social distancing can occur, and daily testing and appropriate levels of PPE for members.”

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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.

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