



April 10, 2020

Andre Nogueira, CEO  
JBS USA Holdings, Inc.  
1770 Promontory Circle  
Greeley, CO 80634

RE: Disease Outbreak Investigation at JBS USA in Greeley, Colorado

Dear Mr. Nogueira:

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is engaged with the Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment (WCDPHE) in conducting a disease control investigation regarding an outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the JBS Meat Packing plant in Greeley, Colorado pursuant to our legal authorities in sections 25-1-122, 25-1-506(3)(b), and 25-1.5-102(1), C.R.S. We appreciate your agreeing to close the plant beginning at midnight on Friday, April 10, 2020, while we work with you to determine how best to protect the health of your employees and prevent any further spread of disease. You have agreed to provide the WCDPHE with an actionable and verifiable plan prior to reopening. If this criteria is met, the plant will reopen at 5:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus. Symptoms include fever, cough or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. In some cases it can be life threatening and fatal. COVID-19 is primarily spread by small droplets, such as those produced when someone coughs or sneezes. COVID-19 may also spread when an individual touches their face after touching a contaminated surface. Infected individuals are contagious before they become symptomatic. Additionally, some individuals never become symptomatic, which makes it difficult for public health officials to conduct contact-tracing or to quarantine individuals who are known to have been exposed.

At this time, we are aware of at least 43 confirmed COVID-19 cases reported since March 25 among employees of JBS. Among these confirmed cases, 14 cases have been hospitalized, 8 have been intubated, and there was one death. At least 32 cases reported working while symptomatic. We are also aware that from March 1 – April 2 there were at least 277 unduplicated visits to three major clinical partners in Weld County by JBS employees and some covered dependents who were evaluated for respiratory illness suspected or confirmed as COVID-19. In comparison, in one of Greeley's largest healthcare systems the average visits per day by JBS employees/dependents in February was two. While the vast majority of these cases are from employees who work the first shift at the plant, there are a large number of probable cases being investigated that include employees who work the second shift. The rapid nature of the spread of disease among JBS employees is very concerning, and the exponential spread of this disease across an employee population of several thousand would be devastating for both the employees and your company, and would quickly overwhelm the medical resources available in the hospitals and other health care providers in Greeley and surrounding communities.



The world is in the midst of a COVID-19 global pandemic, and we are using all available tools and strategies to reduce disease transmission and ultimately flatten the curve. Shutting down the JBS plant is essential to protecting the health of employees, their families, and the community at large. The closure will immediately disrupt transmission of COVID-19 and allow time for public health to work with you to:

- Conduct an employee testing and screening program to begin this weekend. Protocols need to be led and approved by the public health agencies. We request your assistance in communicating with employees;
- Identify ill workers and their contacts and ensure their exclusion from work for the necessary isolation and quarantine periods;
- Identify healthy, non-exposed workers who may be permitted to work after the closure period;
- Establish effective exposure, symptom and fever screening procedures for workers and policies for the exclusion of workers who screen positive;
- Implement public health reporting procedures for all symptomatic and exposed workers;
- Implement policies and procedures that ensure social distancing of all workers, this includes but is not limited to procedures for safe movement through the facility during arrival and departure from work and break times;
- Provide adequate access to PPE and hand washing and hand sanitizing equipment;
- Ensure that housekeeping staff are adhering to the cleaning and disinfecting guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and are using EPA approved disinfectants on surfaces throughout the facility;
- Increase signage and other communication educating workers about COVID-19 symptoms and the importance of social distancing, appropriate mask use, and hand hygiene in languages appropriate for workers in the facility;
- Plan for re-opening with a reduced level of staffing that ensures social distancing can be maintained at all times during each shift; and
- Work with WCDPHE on a plan to re-open with adequate, ongoing measures in place to prevent transmission.

It is quite possible that a brief closure and implementation of the strategies above will not be adequate to prevent transmission of COVID-19 at the plant. If transmission continues, additional measures, including extended closure, may be necessary. Public health resources at both the county and state level are available to advise you regarding the implementation of strategies to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 at the plant when it reopens.

The Governor and Senator Gardner will continue to work on acquiring more tests for the State and Weld County. Both public health departments will endeavor to assist in continuing to test employees as more tests become available.

Finally, we ask that you work with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to provide possible benefit assistance to the JBS impacted workers during this closure. Please contact Patrick Teegarden CDLE Director of Policy and Legislation at [patrick.teegarden@state.co.us](mailto:patrick.teegarden@state.co.us) or 303.908.0866 to coordinate messaging and assistance for your workforce.



**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Hunsaker Ryan".

Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH  
Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Public  
Health and Environment

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Wallace".

Mark E. Wallace, MD, MPH  
Executive Director/Chief Health Officer  
Weld County Department of  
Public Health and Environment