

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 7, 2026

Wesley Batista Filho
Chief Executive Officer
JBS USA
1770 Promontory Circle
Greeley, CO 80634

Matthew J. Lovell
Head of Labor Relations, Environmental
Health & Safety and Security at JBS Foods
1770 Promontory Circle
Greeley, CO 80634

Dear Mr. Batista Filho and Mr. Lovell:

We write today urging you to work in good faith toward a fair contract with your striking workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7 in Greeley, Colorado – one that not only fairly reflects their efforts through meaningful wages and benefits, but also ensures that you are meeting your obligations, as their employer, to meet basic safety standards under federal law.

The JBS facility in Greeley employs around 3,800 workers and processes up to 6,000 cattle daily, representing roughly 5% of U.S. beef-processing capacity.¹ Since 2020, JBS's U.S. operations have been cited for 184 health and safety violations and 40 employment-related offenses, including wage violations, discrimination, and child labor.² Together, these facts illustrate how a company with substantial market share and economic power has been able to operate under conditions that raise serious concerns about worker safety and ethical standards.

As you know, JBS workers engage in incredibly difficult, dangerous jobs, but ones that are critical for feeding our country and driving your company's success. Federal health and safety laws mitigate those risks, but we understand workers in Greeley are forced to work in conditions that lead to high turnover, injury, and in some cases, death. It has been widely reported that many workers have been charged \$1,100 or more to offset the company's costs for life-saving personal protective equipment (PPE), including mesh vests and arm guards essential for safely handling knives and other hazardous tools.³ In some cases, workers are forced to pay these high costs just to replace equipment that does not even belong to them, effectively covering the company's supply expenses out of their own wages. This practice is not only unjust but also in direct violation of federal law. Under rules set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), "the protective equipment... shall be provided by the employer at no cost to employees," and employers "shall not require an employee to provide or pay for his or her own PPE."⁴ Meatpacking jobs are already among the most dangerous in the country, with workers reporting cuts, deep calluses, chemical burns, and repetitive motion injuries from years on the

¹ "Losses Pile Up for Beef Slaughterhouse Owners." The Wall Street Journal, March 25, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/business/jbs-earnings-4q-2025-jbs-f62f56eb>.

² "JBS' Callous Treatment of Workers Puts Profit Before People." Mighty Earth, 2026, <https://mightyearth.org/article/jbs-callous-treatment-of-workers-puts-profit-before-people/>.

³ "57 Languages: Meatpackers Strike for First Time in 40 Years." Labor Notes, March 2026, <https://www.labornotes.org/2026/03/57-languages-meatpackers-strike-first-time-40-years>.

job.⁵ Requiring workers to spend their hard-earned paychecks on equipment that employers are legally obligated to provide is wrong, and it puts both their financial security and their safety at risk.

This financial burden is compounded by the fact that wages at the JBS plant in Greeley have failed to keep pace with the rising cost of living. Workers are being pushed to accept a national contract negotiated last year. JBS has reportedly offered a maximum increase of just 90 cents per hour, structured as 60 cents in the first year and 30 cents in each of the following two years. This amounts to less than 2% per year on average.⁶ These increases are insufficient to keep up with inflation in Colorado, effectively reducing workers' real wages. The contract does not account for Colorado's significantly higher cost of living compared to other states where JBS operates. While Colorado's minimum wage is over \$15 per hour, more than double the federal minimum of \$7.25 and higher than in many other JBS locations, the company's proposed raises remain marginal.

This pattern of suppressed wages is not accidental; it reflects a broader industry-wide strategy that has already been challenged in court. In 2024, JBS agreed to pay \$55 million to settle a federal class-action lawsuit filed in Colorado, alleging that it and other major meatpacking companies engaged in a years-long conspiracy to keep wages artificially low.⁷ The lawsuit, brought on behalf of tens of thousands of workers across roughly 140 plants, accused companies of violating antitrust law by sharing confidential compensation data and coordinating pay practices to limit competition for labor.⁸

Further, while you have cited these incremental wage increases as concessions to your workers, much of those gains are being wiped out by rising health-care costs leaving some workers with only a negligible net increase in pay. For years, many employees accepted slower wage growth in exchange for reliable and affordable health coverage, but that trade-off is no longer holding true. Even in unionized plants where benefits were once more stable, health-care expenses continue to rise, eroding the value of negotiated raises. Under JBS' "company standard" health plan, employee premiums have risen as much as 37% since 2021.⁹ These pressures are further compounded by broader national policy changes, including the expiration of subsidies under the Affordable Care Act and significant cuts to Medicaid enacted under Donald Trump's legislation *H.R. 1* (P.L. 119–21).

We urge you to take immediate action to address these issues by ensuring compliance with federal labor and safety laws, eliminating unlawful PPE charges, negotiating fair wages that

⁴ "Personal Protective Equipment." Occupational Safety and Health Administration, <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.132>.

⁵ "57 Languages: Meatpackers Strike for First Time in 40 Years." Labor Notes, March 2026, <https://www.labornotes.org/2026/03/57-languages-meatpackers-strike-first-time-40-years>.

⁶ "Thousands of JBS Workers Go on Strike at Meatpacking Facility in Greeley." The Colorado Sun, March 9, 2026, <https://coloradosun.com/2026/03/09/jbs-meatpackers-greeley-walk-out-strike>.

⁷ "Tyson, JBS Pay \$127 Million to Resolve Workers' Wage-Fixing Lawsuit." Reuters, March 11, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/tyson-jbs-pay-127-million-resolve-workers-wage-fixing-lawsuit-2024-03-11/>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ "4,000 Meatpackers in Colorado Authorize Strike at JBS, World's Largest Meat Producer." Democracy Now!, April 1, 2026, https://www.democracynow.org/2026/4/1/meatpacking_strike_colorado.

reflect local cost-of-living conditions, and addressing the growing burden of health-care costs on workers. Without meaningful intervention, these practices will continue to undermine worker safety, financial stability, and basic standards of fairness. Despite posting \$86.18 billion in annual sales, up 12% this year and \$4.4 billion in adjusted operating profit, JBS' labor practices remain deeply alarming.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator