

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

April 27, 2020

Noel White
Chief Executive Officer
Tyson Foods, Inc.
2200 Don Tyson Parkway
Springdale, AR 72762

Dear Mr. White,

I am writing in regards to the Tyson Fresh Meat (Tyson) plant in Wallula, Washington, and to urge you to take every available step to protect the health, safety, and economic well-being of these workers. Over the past several weeks, a number of constituents and community representatives reached out to me expressing their concerns regarding the lack of personal protective equipment and inadequate guidance provided by Tyson to employees, and the impact those failures are having on the safety and health of your workers. Based on your representatives' answers to the questions my office has asked so far, it is fair to say these fears were well-founded.

According to reports to date, more than 100 employees at the Wallula plant have tested positive for COVID-19.¹ That is unacceptable. Unfortunately, the full scope of the impact of Tyson's negligence in Wallula will be unknown until testing of the remainder of the employees is completed this week. Additionally, I am concerned the decision to close the plant was not made until April 23, when Tyson was aware more than a week earlier, on April 13, of at least 34 employees having tested positive for COVID-19.²

Ensuring protections for frontline workers – especially those working in our food supply chains – is not just a matter of life-and-death for the workers themselves, but is also vital to ensuring these workplaces are not hotbeds of infection for their families, the surrounding communities, and consumers. I encourage you to continue to consult with state and local public health officials and follow their guidance and advice before making any decisions about when and how to safely-reopen the Wallula plant. At a minimum, Tyson should follow the guidance issued April 26, 2020, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for meat and poultry processing facilities.³ Moreover, I hope you will continue to pay these workers their full wages and benefits during the plant closure. Workers' livelihoods should not be negatively impacted by Tyson's failure to act.

¹<https://www.opb.org/news/article/tyson-meat-workers-pasco-beef-slaughterhouse-covid-19/>

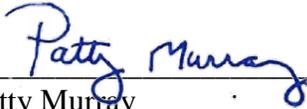
² https://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/document_center/commissioners/OtherDocs/4-13-20%20Press%20Release%20Walla%20Walla%20County%20COVID-19%20Update%20Tyson%20Foods_.pdf

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/meat-poultry-processing-workers-employers.html>

The more than 1400 employees in Wallula, the countless members of the surrounding communities, and the millions of consumers of Tyson's products deserve a swifter and more comprehensive response to the COVID-19 outbreak than what they have experienced thus far. Please continue to keep my staff apprised of any decisions made with regards to the Wallula plant, in particular any decisions that relate to the reopening of the plant.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a decorative flourish at the end.

Patty Murray
United States Senator