



**COLORADO**  
Department of Public  
Health & Environment



**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER 20-25**  
**IMMEDIATE CLOSURE OF JBS MEAT PACKING PLANT**

April 10, 2020

Andre Nogueira, CEO  
JBS USA Holdings, Inc.  
1770 Promontory Circle  
Greeley, CO 80634  
andre.nogueira@jbssa.com

Dear Mr. Nogueira:

We appreciate the dialogue that has occurred between yourself and the Governor, and your staff and public health officials to protect the workers of the JBS meat packing plant and the community at large in Greeley. During the course of those conversations, you offered to voluntarily close the JBS meat packing plant in Greeley, and during that time to make sure disease control measures are put into place, including a testing protocol and cleaning of the plant. This Public Health Order memorializes much of those conversations.

This Public Health Order 20-25 is issued jointly by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment (WCDPHE). You will immediately close your JBS Meat Packing Plant in Greeley, Colorado, to remain closed until Wednesday, April 15 at 5 AM to complete the screening, testing and cleaning as described in this Order. You will take the following steps as outlined below and provide the WCDPHE and CDPHE with an actionable and verifiable plan prior to reopening. In order to prevent unnecessary animal transportation, the stipulations outlined in this order shall be in place and approved prior to cattle procurement and transportation to the establishment for processing. If these criteria are met, as confirmed by county and state health officials, the plant will reopen after 5:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

**BACKGROUND**

CDPHE is engaged with 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. 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

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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 have been two deaths associated with the outbreak. 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. We are also hearing that the outbreak has spread to other areas in Weld County and at least two other counties, resulting in additional hospitalizations. 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. Temporarily closing the JBS plant is essential to protecting the health of employees, their families, and the community at large.

## **ORDER**

1. Effective immediately, the JBS Inc. meat packing plant in Greeley, Colorado shall be closed, which shall immediately disrupt transmission of COVID-19. JBS Inc. must successfully implement all of the following requirements, in consultation with WCDPHE and CDPHE:
  - Conduct an employee testing and screening program to begin this weekend and extend for as long as necessary for public health and safety, as determined by county and state public health officials. Protocols need to be led and approved by the public health agencies. We request your assistance in communicating with employees, contractors, inspectors, and others with regular activities in the facility. The testing program shall
    - include a symptom and exposure screening and employee identification component developed by the public health agencies;
    - assure that sick people are not exposing others during testing, and
    - include an ongoing testing and monitoring program for employees that test negative;
  - Identify ill workers and their contacts and ensure their exclusion from work for the minimum necessary isolation (at least 7 day) and quarantine (14 day) periods;
  - Identify asymptomatic, non-exposed workers who may be permitted to work after the closure period;

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- 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 and food service staff and contractors 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;
- Ensure that any non-employees who have been in contact with the plant, including housekeeping and food service staff, inspectors, and contractors are notified of the COVID-19 outbreak at the plant and provided the opportunity for testing.
- Increase signage and other communication in the appropriate languages to educate 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 and CDPHE on a plan to re-open with adequate, ongoing measures in place to prevent transmission and ensure worker safety.

2. JBS Inc. must consult with WCDPHE and CDPHE in its implementation of these requirements, and share all requested information associated with this disease outbreak investigation, including the following for each employee: name, date of birth, address, phone number, primary language, work shift, responses to symptom and exposure screening questions, test results, and any other knowledge of illness or exposure.

3. JBS Inc. must develop a sequestration housing plan and share it with the State's Unified Command Center: Mike Willis, Director of Emergency Management. The plan should identify how you will assure that healthy employees who have tested negative are housed in a way that protects them from future community and household exposures and includes ensuring accommodation of access and functional needs, morale and welfare, including access to meals that include options accommodating dietary and religious standards, behavioral/mental health support, technology for contact with family and cultural/religious practices.

4. People who are identified as having COVID-19 or exposure to a case of COVID-19 should be excluded from work as described above, and also should be placed on leave and temporarily housed away from other workers that they cohabitate with for 7 days (isolation of cases) or 14 days (quarantine of exposed individuals). This housing should not be co-located with sequestered workers and should also include accommodation for access and functional needs, including access to meals that include options accommodating dietary and religious standards, behavioral/mental health support, technology for contact with family and cultural/religious practices.

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5. 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.

### **DURATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

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. As we work with you to determine how best to protect the health of your employees and prevent any further spread of disease, 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.

This Order will be enforced by any appropriate legal means. Failure to comply with this Order could result in penalties including a fine of up to one thousand (1,000) dollars and imprisonment in the county jail for up to one year, pursuant to 25-1-114, C.R.S.

This Order shall remain in effect until 11:59 pm on Friday, April 24 unless sooner rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing.



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



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