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August 12, 2021

Dear Mike Downs,

As the coronavirus Delta variant surges, I urge you to provide hazard pay bonuses. At a time when Employers are implementing mask and other mandates for employees, and we are hearing about positive Delta variant cases amongst workers in the industry, reinstating hazard pay shows appreciation for the continuing sacrifices of meat packing, processing, and food manufacturing workers on the frontlines of this pandemic who are putting their physical and mental health, and that of their families', at risk to feed our communities.

Over the last year and a half we have heard repeatedly from members about the stress and physical harm caused by the coronavirus. Unacceptably large numbers of members were infected at work and brought it home to their spouses, children, and community – many who also fell sick. We still hear about the lingering symptoms of those who contracted COVID-19. Now as we hear about members who are testing positive with the Delta variant we are even more adamant that Employers should provide hazard pay. Throughout the pandemic, UFCW Local 663 members continue showing up at work, often working longer shifts and on weekends, to make sure production continues and the food chain is secure, while profit margins reach historic highs.

Please reward the sacrifices of your employees by reinstating hazard pay and publicly voicing your support for meatpacking, processing, and food manufacturing workers to be included by the Frontline Worker Pay Working Group created by Governor Walz to receive some of the \$250 million set aside from the federal American Rescue Plan. Several UFCW Local 663 members have already testified and others will continue to testify in the weeks ahead about their experiences to make sure that all frontline workers are top of mind to be included. I ask that you do the same by signing up to testify and/or submitting a letter of support.

Feel free to reach out to me to discuss in greater detail how we can work together so that meatpacking, processing, and food manufacturing workers are acknowledged for all their hard work.

Sincerely,

Matt Utecht, President
UFCW Local 663

Cc: David Ross