



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

# OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KRISTI L. NOEM | GOVERNOR

April 11, 2020

Ken Sullivan  
Smithfield Foods  
1400 N Weber Ave  
Sioux Falls, SD 57103

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Today marks 32 days since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Minnehaha County. Since then, cases in the Sioux Falls area have grown steadily, especially this past week.

As the Governor of South Dakota and the Mayor of Sioux Falls, we are both impressed with how our people have flattened our curve and slowed the spread of COVID-19. Yet, we are each concerned that 238 of the confirmed cases in South Dakota are connected to the Smithfield plant in Sioux Falls.

We understand that Smithfield has taken numerous steps to help mitigate COVID-19 spread, yet there we believe there is an opportunity for you to do more. As of today, individuals who work at Smithfield account for 54 percent of the total cases (438) reported in Minnehaha County. That is an alarming statistic.

Based on this, we recommend that Smithfield suspend operations for a minimum of 14 days as soon as possible to protect your employees, their families, the Sioux Falls community and the State of South Dakota. This isolation period is consistent with what we understand to be the incubation period of COVID-19 based on the facts and science available as of the date of this letter.

This suspension would afford Smithfield time to isolate employees from one another, conduct appropriate testing of employees before they return to work, properly disinfect workspaces, readjust operations for employee distancing, and establish stronger protocols to screen employee health conditions before they re-enter the Smithfield facility.

We are also asking that Smithfield continue to provide full pay and benefits to its employees during this 14-day suspension as well as paid sick time for infected and symptomatic employees to encourage them to stay home in an effort to avoid further spreading COVID-19.

As a critical infrastructure employer for the nation's food supply chain and a major employer in Sioux Falls, it is crucial that Smithfield have a healthy workforce to ensure the continuity of operations to feed the nation. At the same time, employees need a healthy work environment,

and accordingly we are calling on you to fully suspend your operations for the period above to mitigate additional spread of this virus.

We are also asking for full transparency on the actions you are and will be taking to ensure the safety of your employees and the people of South Dakota, and at the same time minimizing the disruption to the national food supply chain.

Please know we fully understand the gravity of what we are requesting of Smithfield, and we are aware of the challenges faced by your industry across the nation as a result of COVID-19. However, this is your moment to take swift action for your people, the community of Sioux Falls and the State of South Dakota.

Best regards,

State of South Dakota



Kristi Noem  
Governor

City of Sioux Falls



Paul TenHaken  
Mayor

Copy to: Dennis Organ, Chief Operating Officer, Smithfield Foods  
Mark Wiggs, Plant Manager, Smithfield Foods