

United States Senate

June 2, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
United State Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
United States Department of Homeland
Security
Washington, DC 20528

Attorney General Garland, Secretary Vilsack, and Secretary Mayorkas:

I write today to reiterate my concerns about agriculture consolidation and how it leaves the American food supply vulnerable to attack. This consolidation continues to hollow out rural America, hurt our economy, and leave family farms and ranches in the lurch. Recent events now make clear that this consolidation is a threat to our national security.

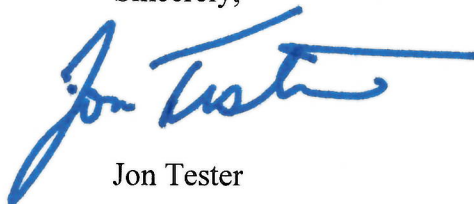
This weekend, the world's largest meat packer, JBS, fell victim to a ransomware attack that forced it to close all federal and regional facilities in the U.S. JBS currently processes more than 20 percent of cattle, more than 15 percent of the pork, and a significant portion of the poultry in the United States. It is unacceptable for a foreign adversary to disrupt such a significant portion of our food supply with one attack. That's why I urge DOJ, DHS, and USDA to swiftly investigate this attack and develop recommendations to prevent a similar attack from happening again.

In recent weeks, it is increasingly evident our adversaries understand the damage they can inflict by targeting our critical infrastructure. While any attack on critical infrastructure can lead to substantial damages, attacks on our food supply are particularly alarming. As a farmer, I know first-hand both the importance of feeding America and the complexity of our food supply chains. Through my own experiences and from conversations with countless producers, it is clear that our food systems are far too vulnerable. Last year, the pandemic highlighted how consolidation is wreaking havoc on markets and now this attack on JBS shows that our enemies can take full advantage of this situation.

I urge your agencies to work together to get to the bottom of this incident. American producers and consumers are already hurting from the economic turmoil of this past year. In order to prevent future attacks, we must identify and fortify our critical infrastructure. As part of

this effort, we must examine market consolidation as a factor. I stand ready to work with you to ensure the continuity of our food supply and to strengthen our national security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jon Tester