

May 19, 2025

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1770 Promontory Circle
Greenley, CO 80634

Wesley Batista Filho
CEO
JBS USA
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Dear Mr. Penn and Mr. Batista Filho:

I write with concern about the possibility that large corporations, including Big Ag companies like Pilgrim's Pride, may have donated massive amounts to President Trump's inauguration in an effort to influence the actions of his administration.¹ Pilgrim's Pride was the single largest donor to the Trump-Vance Inaugural Committee.² Its \$5 million donation amounts to more than the contributions from Apple's CEO plus Amazon, Meta, and Google, combined.³

I am concerned Pilgrim's Pride may have made its contribution to the inaugural fund to curry favor with the Trump administration. Big Ag companies have come under scrutiny from federal regulators in recent years for antitrust violations, animal welfare concerns, and harms to workers, consumers, and competition.⁴ Pilgrim's Pride and its parent company, JBS, have been accused of multiple

¹ Public Citizen, "Trump's Inauguration Donor Pool Includes \$50 Million in Contributions from Corporations Under Investigation or Facing Federal Enforcement," April 21, 2025, <https://www.citizen.org/news/trumps-corporate-inauguration-donor-pool-littered-with-federal-investigations-enforcement-lawsuits/>.

² NBC News, "Major corporate interests and megadonors gave \$239 million to fund Trump's inauguration," Ben Kasimar, April 21, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/major-corporate-interests-megadonors-gave-239-million-fund-trumps-inau-rcna202074>.

³ Axios, "Scoop: Apple CEO Tim Cook donates \$1 million to Trump inauguration," Mike Allen, January 3, 2025, <https://www.axios.com/2025/01/03/tim-cook-apple-donate-1-million-trump-inauguration?lctg=75845185>; Associated Press, "Amazon to contribute \$1 million to Trump's inauguration fund. Meta is also donating \$1M," December 13, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-meta-zuckerberg-inauguration-donation-c540bf7c638def11b8428e633965c718>; CNBC, "Google donates \$1 million to Trump's inauguration fund, joining other tech giants," Ashley Capoot, January 9, 2025, <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/01/09/google-donates-1-million-to-trumps-inauguration-fund.html>.

⁴ Investigate Midwest, "It's time to crack down on the meat market monopoly," Dave Dickey, November 26, 2024, <https://investigatemiwast.org/2024/11/26/its-time-to-crack-down-on-the-meat-market-monopoly/>; Animal Welfare Institute, "Report: JBS, Smithfield Worst Slaughter Plants in US," April 29, 2020, <https://awionline.org/press-releases/report-jbs-smithfield-worst-slaughter-plants-us>; U.S. Department of Labor, "Federal investigators find JBS Foods failed to protect Green Bay plant worker from amputations by ignoring required safety standards," press release, June 20, 2023, <https://www.osha.gov/news/newsreleases/region5/06202023>; Mother Jones, "Immigrants on the Line," Ted Genoways, May-June 2025, <https://www.motherjones.com/food/2025/03/haiti-migrant-meatpacking-jbs-labor-deportation/>; U.S. Department of Labor, "US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR SECURES AGREEMENT WITH JBS USA, NATION'S LARGEST MEAT PACKING PROCESSOR, TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR COMPLIANCE," January 13, 2025, <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20250113>; U.S. Department of Agriculture, "JBS USA Food Company Recalls Imported Boneless Beef Products Due to Possible E. coli O157:H7 Contamination," April 16, 2021, <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls-alerts/jbs-usa-food-company-recalls-imported-boneless-beef-products-due-possible-e.->

antitrust and price-fixing violations. In 2021, Pilgrim's Pride pleaded guilty in a criminal case brought by the Department of Justice (DOJ) related to "a conspiracy to fix prices and rig bids for broiler chicken products."⁵ That same year, Pilgrim's Pride settled a private antitrust class action lawsuit brought by poultry buyers.⁶ And just last year, Pilgrim's Pride reached a settlement agreement in a private antitrust class alleging that it conspired with rivals to underpay chicken farmers.⁷

Pilgrim's Pride could benefit from favorable treatment from the current administration; the company is currently the subject of several ongoing federal investigations. In February 2022, Pilgrim's Pride announced it was the target of a DOJ civil investigation into "human resources antitrust matters."⁸ In October of that same year, Pilgrim's Pride announced DOJ had opened a separate civil investigation regarding the company's "grower contracts and payment practices."⁹ Both investigations are still ongoing, and the DOJ informed Pilgrim's Pride that it "is likely to file a civil complaint pursuant to at least one of" these investigations.¹⁰ DOJ has also brought a lawsuit against the data company Agri Stats for allegedly "organizing and managing anticompetitive information exchanges among broiler chicken, pork, and turkey processors."¹¹ The lawsuit describes Pilgrim's Pride as an alleged "co-conspirator," though it does not formally name the company as a defendant.¹²

The Trump Administration is already taking actions that have benefited Pilgrim's Pride and its corporate affiliates. Earlier this month, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) approved an application by JBS, to list shares on the New York Stock Exchange.¹³ JBS had pursued the listing for close to a decade and faced significant opposition.¹⁴ The SEC's decision, made just

coli; Reuters, "JBS to pay \$83.5 million in latest beef price-fixing settlement," February 3, 2025, Mike Scarcella, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/jbs-pay-835-million-latest-beef-price-fixing-settlement-2025-02-03>.

⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, "One of the Nation's Largest Chicken Producers Pleads Guilty to Price Fixing and is Sentenced to a \$107 Million Criminal Fine," press release, February 23, 2021, <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/one-nation-s-largest-chicken-producers-pleads-guilty-price-fixing-and-sentenced-107-million>.

⁶ SupplySide Food and Beverage Journal, "Pilgrim's Pride, Tyson Foods to settle broiler chicken antitrust litigation," January 12, 2021, Josh Long, <https://www.supplysidefbj.com/food-beverage-regulations/pilgrim-s-pride-tyson-foods-to-settle-broiler-chicken-antitrust-litigation>.

⁷ Reuters, "Pilgrim's Pride agrees to pay \$41 mln to settle investors' lawsuit," January 27, 2025, Mike Scarcella, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/pilgrims-pride-agrees-pay-41-mln-settle-investors-lawsuit-2025-01-27/>.

⁸ Bloomberg Law, "Pilgrim's Pride Says It's Cooperating With DOJ Investigation," October 27, 2022, Michael Hirtzer and Leah Nylen, <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/antitrust/pilgrims-pride-says-its-cooperating-with-doj-investigation>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ JBS S.A., "ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934 For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2023," <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1450123/000121390024084781/ea0202118-05.htm>.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Justice, "Justice Department Sues Agri Stats for Operating Extensive Information Exchanges Among Meat Processors," press release, September 28, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-sues-agri-stats-operating-extensive-information-exchanges-among-meat>.

¹² Accountable.US, "Report: Top 3 Chicken Producers Involved in DOJ Antitrust Lawsuit Racked Up Nearly \$700M In Settlements For Price-and-Wage-Fixing," press release, October 10, 2024, <https://accountable.us/report-top-3-chicken-producers-involved-in-doj-antitrust-lawsuit-racked-up-nearly-700m-in-settlements-for-price-and-wage-fixing/>.

¹³ Food Dive, "Meat giant JBS gets SEC approval to list shares in US," April 24, 2025, Sarah Zimmerman, <https://www.fooddive.com/news/jbs-sec-approves-listing-nyse-meat-beef/746270/>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

months after the donation from Pilgrim's Pride, raises questions regarding undue influence.¹⁵ Separately, DOJ announced on February 10th, 2025 that it would suspend enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which prohibits U.S. companies and persons from bribing foreign officials to obtain or retain business.¹⁶ Billionaire majority stakeholders of JBS have violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, resulting in the JBS investment-related company paying over \$250 million in 2020.¹⁷ Pilgrim's Pride could also benefit from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent decisions to waive certain administrative requirements for poultry and pork producers and to stop collecting related worker safety data.¹⁸ The move puts workers at risk while boosting the profits of major meat processors like Pilgrim's Pride.

Your large donations and direct stake in federal policies and enforcement actions, and the Trump Administration's series of actions that benefit your companies, raise serious concerns about a potential quid-pro-quo arrangement. Congress and the public deserve answers. Therefore, I ask that you respond to the following questions no later than May 28, 2025:

1. When and under what circumstances did Pilgrim's Pride decide to make its contributions to the Trump inaugural fund?
2. What was Pilgrim's Pride and JBS's rationale for these contributions?
3. Which individuals within the company or its parent, JBS, chose to make these donations?
4. Was the Pilgrim's Pride Board or JBS USA Board informed of these plans, and if so, did board members provide affirmative consent to make the donation?
 - a. Did Pilgrim's Pride or JBS USA inform shareholders of plans to make these donations?
5. Did Pilgrim's Pride or JBS officials communicate with members of the Trump Transition team or other associates of President Trump about these donations? If so, please list all such communications, including the participants, and the nature of any communication.
6. Have any Pilgrim's Pride officials communicated with the DOJ regarding the ongoing price fixing investigation into Pilgrim's Pride, or DOJ's antitrust suit against Agri Stats, in which Pilgrim's Pride is named as an alleged co-conspirator?
7. Have any company officials communicated with the White House, or any agencies or Administration officials, about any other ongoing federal investigations, enforcement actions, or other legal proceedings involving Pilgrim's Pride?
8. Have any JBS officials communicated to the SEC, the White House, or any other federal agencies about the recent approval of JBS to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange?

¹⁵ Global Witness, "JBS listing approval reveals deep failure in US financial regulation," April 23, 2025, <https://globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/jbs-listing-approval-reveals-deep-failure-in-us-financial-regulation>.


¹⁶ White House, "Pausing Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Enforcement to Further American Economic and National Security," February 10, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/pausing-foreign-corrupt-practices-act-enforcement-to-further-american-economic-and-national-security/>; 15 U.S.C. §§ 78dd-1

¹⁷ NOTUS, "This Chicken Company Paid Over \$100 Million in Fines for Fixing Prices, Then Gave \$5 Million to Trump's Inauguration," April 21, 2025, Claire Heddles, <https://www.notus.org/donald-trump/inauguration-fundraising-pilgrims-pride>.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Secretary Rollins Takes Action to Streamline U.S. Pork and Poultry Processing," press release, March 17, 2025, <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/03/17/secretary-rollins-takes-action-streamline-us-pork-and-poultry-processing>.

9. Have any Pilgrim's Pride officials been in contact with any federal agencies regarding any other federal regulations or other policy developments that would impact Pilgrim's Pride? If so, what was the nature of these discussions?

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator