

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2025

Larry Helfant
Chief Operating Officer
Boar's Head Provision Co., Inc.
1819 Main St, #800
Sarasota, FL 34236

Dear Mr. Helfant,

We write to inquire about the reopening of the Boar's Head deli meat plant at the heart of last year's deadly *Listeria* outbreak. According to recent reporting by the *Associated Press*, this facility in Jarratt, Virginia is set to reopen in the coming months.¹ Before Boar's Head proceeds, the American public deserve answers.

This plant was shut down in September following the deadliest *Listeria* outbreak since 2011, in which 19 states were affected, 59 persons hospitalized, and 10 died.² According to records released by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), inspectors identified 69 records of "noncompliances" at this individual facility in the year leading up to the outbreak. Inspectors found and documented mold and mildew around the hand washing sinks for staff working with meats that are supposed to be ready to eat; mold in holding coolers between the site's smokehouses; blood in puddles on the floor; and insects in and around deli meats at the plant.³ The totality of these issues demonstrate a repeated pattern of food safety negligence that jeopardized Americans' public health, and sadly, lives were lost.

We are especially concerned given recent inspection reports at Boar's Head facilities in three states – Arkansas, Indiana, and Virginia – that documented sanitation problems similar to the issues that led to this deadly outbreak last year. Most recent reports cite these problems from June, just two months ago.

According to the *Associated Press*, in the past seven months, government inspectors reported problems that included instances of meat and fat residue left on equipment and walls, drains blocked with meat products, beaded condensation on ceilings and floors, overflowing trash cans, and staff who did not wear protective hairnets and plastic aprons — or wash their hands.⁴ There were also repeated reports of "dried fat and protein from the previous day's production" on equipment, stairs, and walls. In April, an inspector at the Petersburg plant, also in Virginia, reported finding discarded meat underneath equipment, including "5-6 hams, 4 large pieces of meat and a large quantity of pooling meat juice."

It is appalling that Boar's Head is encountering similar issues at other facilities of theirs, including at another facility in Virginia. This information leaves us less than confident that the facility in Jarratt, Virginia is prepared to reopen safely.

Reopening a food processing facility after a *Listeria* outbreak is complex. *Listeria monocytogenes* is a hardy bacteria capable of surviving in harsh environments, including refrigerated temperatures, and can form biofilms, which make it difficult to eliminate from surfaces and equipment. Thorough cleaning and sanitation, along with necessary infrastructure and equipment upgrades must occur to reopen safely. The examples of similar issues at

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/boars-head-deli-meat-listeria-e9a1cefl dca3f7545dba0024bf5ac594>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/s0925-listeria-outbreak.html>

³ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bugs-mold-mildew-inspection-boars-head-plant-listeria/>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/boars-head-deli-meat-listeria-e9a1cefl dca3f7545dba0024bf5ac594>

other Boar's Head facilities across the country leave us doubtful that needed cleaning, sanitation, and infrastructure upgrades have occurred at the facility in Jarratt.

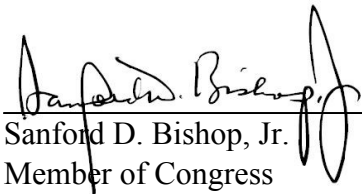
It seems your company continues to show a disregard for food safety and for the public health of the American people. Boar's Head has an obligation to protect public health and prepare and sell food that meets strict safety standards.

As members of Congress whose constituents will be directly affected by the reopening of this the Virginia facility and continued food safety issues plaguing other Boar's Head facilities, we request you come before members of the Congressional Food Safety Caucus, chaired by Congresswoman DeLauro, to answer questions and provide information on your company's plans to reopen your Jarratt facility and disturbing culture of food safety present in your facilities across the country. We look forward to your response by September 26.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



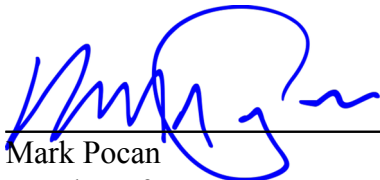
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



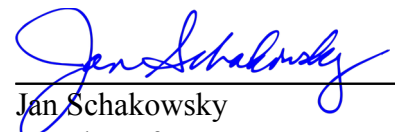
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



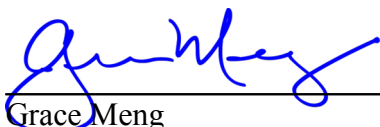
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress