



Greg Gianforte
Congress of the United States
Montana

September 27, 2017

Ms. Carmen Rottenberg
Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Food and Safety
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Rottenberg:

I contact you today about the egregious conduct of Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) front-line supervisor Jeffery Legg. My constituents have described a series of wanton abuses from this out-of-control bureaucrat. These family businesses have filed numerous complaints with FSIS after Dr. Legg imposed on them outrageous compliance costs for regulations that do not exist. When confronted about his enforcement of self-created regulations, Legg retaliated against them.

Legg's loose interpretations of regulations were so common that businesses in his crosshairs and other federal regulators commonly referred to them as "Legg's Regs." Legg's Regs have frustrated small meat packers across Montana and North Dakota and have severely impacted their operation to the point many have considered shutting down or scaling back plans to expand their plants.

Following a tour of one processing plant, Legg instructed the business owner to build an office for federal inspectors. Legg advised the office should be at least 8'x10' with a locking door, a heat source, a desk, and a file cabinet. No such regulation exists for processing plants.

Legg instructed the owner to refurbish the basement with new concrete, though no business was conducted there. No such regulation exists.

Legg instructed the owner that he could not use wooden pallets and would need to replace them with plastic ones. No such regulation exists.

Believing that Legg was providing him with reliable guidance based on regulatory code, the owner spent around \$10,000 on changes Legg required. Those were funds he could have used to grow his business, invest in needed equipment, or hire more employees.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. Legg instructed multiple small business owners to implement changes that are not part of the regulatory code. Legg's Regs have had a chilling effect on meat packers throughout Montana and North Dakota.

After many frustrated meat packers reported a list of complaints to FSIS, Legg would encourage his inspectors to retaliate with more "noncompliance records." After complaints were filed against him, Legg would claim "harassment" from the aggrieved producers prevented him from doing his job. Legg's superiors acknowledged that his actions were out of line on several occasions, and yet he retained his position.

I call on you to investigate these practices within your department. It is unacceptable for federal bureaucrats to target family businesses. This pattern of behavior has lasted for over 15 years. I will continue to focus on the issue until it is resolved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gianforte', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress