

Good afternoon Chair, and Commissioners. My name is Claudia Ambriz and I live in Austin MN. I am here today to voice my support to this working group in favor of providing frontline worker pay for all essential workers.

I'm a UFCW Local 9 member at Quality Pork Processors. I have worked for QPP for a little over 16 years. I work on the production floor and now am the walking steward.

When COVID hit, I watched the virus go from department to department and from nights to days. I watched co-workers fall ill as it went through the Plant, though our neighborhoods, and the apartment buildings where my co-workers live.

I have seen some close friends who were very sick and who still suffer from the effects of COVID over a year ago. This stuff is NO JOKE!

In the Plant there are 2 main departments, the Kill and the Cut. The Kill is hot and damp, workers wore and are again wearing masks. The masks are soaking wet in no time, it's hot and only it's making a tough job unbearable and almost impossible.

In the Cut, it is cold and with a mask and face shield that steams up, it is making a dangerous job twice as dangerous.

We had no choice but to go to work each day while others could work from home or were out of work because of shut downs.

We kept the state fed. We kept going to work. We kept getting sick but we kept running. Some nights we were so short of workers hardly anyone was on their own job, but we did it because we knew it was the right thing to do.

And you need to do this because it is the right thing to do. Minnesota quickly compensated the farmers for their livestock that couldn't be delivered to the market. Are we, the packing house workers, a step below livestock?

Thank you for your time.