

# U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Hawley: Ask Federal Trade Commission to open antitrust investigation into meatpackers amid plant closures

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) asked the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to open an antitrust investigation into the meatpacking industry. The industry is currently dominated by just a handful of large, multinational firms that have concentrated meat processing into fewer and fewer facilities, leaving America’s food supply chain vulnerable to disruptions.

In the bipartisan letter, the Senators note that the closing of three pork plants because of COVID-19 has resulted “in the shutdown of a staggering 15 percent of America’s pork production” at a time when stable supply chains have become more critical than ever.

“As a result, farmers cannot process their livestock—which are costly to maintain—and consumers risk seeing shortages at grocery stores, exacerbating the food insecurity that all too many Americans are currently experiencing,” **the Senators wrote.** “These harms might have been mitigated if the meatpacking industry was less concentrated. The current COVID-19 crisis has exposed the vulnerabilities of American supply chains and the importance of ensuring that, when disaster strikes, America’s food supplies are not in the hands of a few, mostly foreign-based firms.”

**They continue,** “The FTC has the power to shed light on these growing competition and security problems in our food supply. The Commission should ask

probing questions about major meatpacking firms' conduct, pricing, and contracting, as well as how their commitments to overseas interests impact the U.S. market and national security. Moreover, because a competitive food industry is so critical to the public interest, you should make the findings of any investigation public.”

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) or below. An online version of this release is available [here](#).