

## Braley Asks Labor Commissioner for Additional Information on Reduction of Agriprocessors Fines

Today Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) sent a letter to Iowa Labor Commissioner Dave Neil after the Des Moines Register reported this morning that the state of Iowa had reduced fines to Agriprocessors, Inc., for workplace safety violations at their Postville plant earlier this year.

Iowa Workforce Development Reduced Fines for Workplace Safety Violations at Agriprocessors' Postville Plant in March

Washington,  
May 30 -

Today Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) sent a letter to Iowa Labor Commissioner Dave Neil after the Des Moines Register reported this morning that the state of Iowa had reduced fines to Agriprocessors, Inc., for workplace safety violations at their Postville plant earlier this year.

In the letter, Braley asks the agency to explain their reasoning for reducing the fines and requests information about any actions Agriprocessors agreed to take to get the fines reduced.

In the wake of the May 12 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid of the Postville plant, Braley has been pressing federal officials to investigate apparent violations of workplace safety, child labor, environmental, and immigration law at Agriprocessors.

The text of the letter to the Iowa Division of Labor Services follows.

May 30, 2008

Dave Neil, Labor Commissioner

The Iowa Division of Labor Services

Iowa Workforce Development

1000 East Grand Avenue

Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209

Dear Labor Commissioner Neil:

Last

November, I wrote to Acting Secretary Connor of the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding food safety violations at the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant in Postville. Since then, I have been closely following and investigating reports of other violations of the law at Agriprocessors concerning workplace safety, child labor, the environment, and immigration.

Today it was reported in the Des Moines Register that "the state [of Iowa] has agreed to reduce by three-fourths a fine against the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant in Postville for violations of workplace safety violations."

As

you know, on March 20, 2008, the Iowa Division of Labor Services issued citations for 39 violations of workplace safety rules and a proposed \$182,000 fine, in response to inspections that took place at the plant in October, 2007 and February, 2008. Then on March 28, 2008, Agriprocessors officials and state labor officials agreed to reduce fines resulting from 26 of the previously mentioned violations. One week later the same parties agreed to lower the fines on the remaining 13 violations.

In light of these reported facts, I would greatly appreciate answers to the following questions:

- What were the 39 violations that were levied against Agriprocessors?
- What was the Department's justification for reducing the fines for these violations?

Additionally, in the same Des Moines Register article, an Iowa Workforce Development spokesperson was quoted as saying, "Penalties are sometimes reduced provided the employer takes a specific action by a certain date."

- Are there specific actions that Agriprocessors agreed to in order to get their fines lowered?
- If so, what are these actions and by when do they need to be completed?

I  
look forward to hearing from you within the next ten days regarding the  
reduction of fines against the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant. Thank  
you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Bruce Braley

Member of Congress