



Chartered by United Food & Commercial Workers International Union  
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**KIM C. CORDOVA**  
President

October 29, 2021

**KEVIN R. SCHNEIDER**  
Secretary-Treasurer

Steve Burnham  
President  
King Soopers/City Market  
65 Tejon Street  
Denver, CO 80223

Re: Upcoming Labor Negotiations

Mr. Burnham:

I write in my capacity as President of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 7, representing more than 12,000 members employed by King Soopers and City Market here in Colorado. As I'm sure you are aware, 16 collective bargaining agreements between Local 7 and your Companies will be expiring in the next several months, and negotiations will begin in earnest over successor agreements.

In the more than 50-year bargaining history between Local 7, its predecessors, and King Soopers and City Market, there has never been a more monumental set of negotiations. After all, our members, your workers, have risked their health every day for the past 20 months - exposing themselves and their families to the dangers of COVID-19. The Company has reported more than 863 workers have contracted COVID-19 and we are aware of at least four COVID related employee deaths. Sadly, more often than not, over this period King Soopers/City Market has chosen again and again to put profits over workplace safety. The Company has become lax about the cleaning and sanitation of stores, failed to enforce mask mandates for customers, and has refused to put armed security in each of its stores to deal with dangerous and unruly customers. The Company has repeatedly forced our members, your workers, to risk their health and safety – even their lives – just to come to work.

Adding insult to injury, current King Soopers and City Market workers now find themselves among the lowest paid employees in the State of Colorado, while fast food workers earning \$18 an hour or more with enhanced benefits, and competitors like Target, Costco, Whole Foods, and even Wal-Mart paying far more than King Soopers and City Market. In fact, Starbucks has announced moving pay rates from \$15 to \$23 an hour. The Company has also continued to punish the workers in Denver County stores by forcing them to work thousands of hours before they receive their contractual wage increases in which we have filed 70 grievances.

Recently, the Company proposed to increase **starting wages** at Denver metro stores (outside of Denver County) to \$14 per hour and at Southern Colorado and Northern Colorado stores to \$13.50 per hour. Yet these proposed increases were nothing more than a mirage in an attempt to lure workers in the front door only to stab them in the back once they arrived with workers being forced to work some 4000 hours or more – literally for years – before ever receiving a wage increase.

Moreover, the proposal contained no wage increases at all for anyone currently paid \$14.00 per hour or more, which is over 75% of the workforce. Taking care of new hires on the backs of current workers is as disrespectful as it is foolish. Indeed, for current employees the proposal would have been outright harmful – insisting that new employees off the street could be hired at higher rates of pay while those already in the wage progressions still might have to work thousands of hours before their own wages would rise. Finally, the

proposals would have only addressed front range King Soopers locations, and not City Market stores on the Western Slope where wages are also inadequate.

What's more, even with these paltry increases, King Soopers/City Market wages would still be far below market rates – not to mention the cost of living in Colorado which has continued to skyrocket. Our members experience the effects of King Soopers'/City Market's poverty wages every day through short-staffing – often being asked to do the job of two and even three other workers because the Company refuses to pay a livable and thriving wage to its workers. Indeed, you had no problem mandating these essential workers show up and risk their lives during the pandemic to feed the community, but many of your own employees cannot afford to feed themselves and their families. A number of our members, despite working 40 or more hours per week for King Soopers/City Market, nonetheless find themselves unable to find adequate housing.

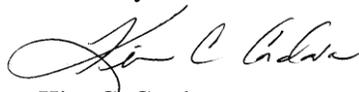
Instead of investing in keeping the existing workforce, the Company's actions have demonstrated a repeated commitment to outsourcing bargaining unit work and using third-parties like Instacart, DPI, Advantage, Boar's Head, etc. to provide the Company with "free" labor. Instead of honoring the agreements you have made with these workers in the collective bargaining agreements – because – as Kroger's CEO says, you "can't find talent," you have instead sought to replace your current workforce with outside gig workers. This new pay proposal is no different – it invests in new hires – but nothing in your existing workforce.

The ongoing trend of the Great Resignation, also known as the Big Quit, stems from employers like King Soopers/City Market treating workers as sacrificial and fungible. While frontline essential workers must deal with short staffing, unsafe work environments and insufficient pay every day, Company executives and shareholders are getting richer off the backs of our Union members – your essential workers. Instead of stock buybacks and executive bonuses, the Company must invest in the workers who spend every day ensuring King Soopers/City Market customers repeatedly come back.

Finally, the mass turnover in your workforce will not end soon unless there is real change in working conditions in this country. There is not a labor shortage, there is a living wage shortage, a safe workplace shortage, a hazard pay shortage, and a respect on the job shortage.

Formal negotiations over these matters will soon begin – and I invite you to join us at the bargaining table and demonstrate to our members, your workers, that King Soopers/City Market can be a great place to work. Show them that the Company will respect them, pay them consistent with the monumental profits they deliver to the Company, and protect them by ensuring a safe workplace.

Sincerely,



Kim C. Cordova  
UFCW Local 7 President  
UFCW International Vice President

cc: Athar Bilgrami  
Leroy Westmoreland  
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