



Fair Trade for a Better World

Dear Los Angeles Unified School District Board:

I am writing on behalf of Fair World Project to ask that you vote NO on awarding Tyson a 5-year contract to supply LAUSD with chicken. Fair World Project is an independent campaign of Organic Consumers Association with a mission to educate and advocate for a just global economy that, among other goals, fosters sustainable livelihoods and communities.

We appreciate the significant challenges posed by this first attempt at implementing the Good Food Purchasing Policy, and we thank the many people involved in this process who have clearly made a good faith effort to try to implement the policy fairly. We also appreciate your efforts to adjust this current chicken RFP process to better ensure the application of the GFPP in the evaluation of bids and find the best chicken vendors for LAUSD.

However, we cannot in good conscience support the recommendation to award Tyson any part of the chicken contract. Tyson has a terrible track record of routinely violating with impunity the sustainability principles required by the GFPP – for example, from 2007 to 2015, Tyson was cited for over 220 OSHA violations for a total of almost \$7.7 million in penalties and was also responsible for the death of 11 workers in that time period. Tyson’s record has not improved over the course of its current 5-year contract with LAUSD. Recently, an in-depth report from ProPublica¹ found that Tyson has spent the past 25 years working to undermine workers’ compensation laws in multiple states around the U.S., and Oxfam America released a new study on the horrible conditions in the chicken processing industry, which highlighted Tyson as one of the main bad actors.² Given these facts, we have no confidence that Tyson will be able to comply with the baseline standards of GFPP and the district’s Sweatfree Purchasing Policy under a new LAUSD contract.

We therefore urge that the recommended chicken contract with Tyson be rejected based on the exploitative nature of its chicken supply chain that harms consumers, including school children, workers, farmers, animals, the environment, and local economies. If LAUSD is not able to contract with another vendor for the chicken products that Tyson would have provided, LAUSD should begin an educational campaign with students, teachers, and staff to explain that fewer chicken dishes are on the menu because LAUSD believes in the importance of putting its values into practice, of maintaining integrity by implementing its policies, and of sometimes sacrificing individual immediate satisfaction to prioritize student health and the well-being of our communities. The rejection of Tyson is a unique and powerful opportunity for LAUSD to demonstrate to students, in particular, what it means to stand by their values.

This is a unique opportunity to shape our food system and the way we prioritize our values.

Thank you in advance for your leadership,

Kerstin Lindgren
Campaign Director

¹ <https://www.propublica.org/article/tyson-foods-secret-recipe-for-carving-up-workers-comp>

² <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2015/10/27/3716268/poultry-plant-safety/>