



National Cattlemen's  
Beef Association

August 13, 2019

The Honorable Raymond P. Martinez  
Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Martinez:

Last Friday, a fire shut down the Tyson beef processing plant in Holcomb, Kansas. This plant processed 6,000 head of cattle per day equating to six percent of total U.S. processing capacity. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) requests you provide an emergency declaration suspending Hours of Service for drivers hauling live cattle for a period of at least nine months while the plant is being rebuilt.

The loss of the Tyson plant has caused significant disruptions to the cattle industry due to uncertainty of where cattle will go to be processed. With this plant expected to take cattle every day, our industry must find a place for them to be handled. While we expect other processing facilities to take more cattle, many of them are in other states and hundreds of miles away. We must continue to process cattle regardless of the temporary loss of a plant. The cattle scheduled to be processed at the Tyson plant cannot remain at the feedyards for months on end. In order to protect their welfare, these cattle must be processed immediately. Additionally, cattle are scheduled out for months at a time, so this will be an issue until the Tyson plant reopens.

Cattle haulers have a tremendous reputation for safe driving as the current safety record shows. We believe this safety record can be maintained as we haul cattle further until the Tyson plant is rebuilt. We ask the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to provide flexibility through an emergency declaration and suspension of Hours of Service for cattle haulers. This will be a critical step in protecting animal welfare, the nation's beef supply, and the livelihoods of American farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Colin Woodall  
Senior Vice President – Government Affairs

