

UNITEHERE! Local 11

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August 7, 2026

John Ackerman
Chief Executive Officer
Doug Webster
Chief Operations and Maintenance Officer
Los Angeles World Airports
6101 Westchester Pkwy,
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Re: Urgent Concern re Flying Food Group's Refusal to Allow Access to Cal/OSHA Inspector

Dear Mr. Ackerman and Mr. Webster,

We write on behalf of UNITE HERE Local 11, which represents approximately 700 workers at Flying Food Group ("FFG"), an airline catering company operating at LAX under a permit from Los Angeles World Airports ("LAWA") regarding an alarming development at Flying Food Group and to ask for your immediate intervention.

As you may be aware, on Wednesday August 5, 2026, we filed a complaint with Cal/OSHA raising concerns regarding a range of unsafe and unsanitary conditions at the facility. The complaint, which is attached, included the following allegations:

- An outbreak of maggots, flies, and mold in decomposing food and lack of appropriate PPE
- Mold growing on dish room ceiling
- Cockroaches or similar vermin in the workplace
- Excessive heat and illness risk in the dish room
- Insufficient or nonexistent soap and drying paper in facility restrooms
- Failure to provide food for employees in accordance with hygienic standards
- General failure to maintain an effective injury and illness prevention program

This morning, we were informed of an extraordinarily disturbing development in this matter. A Cal/OSHA compliance inspector reported that he attempted to visit the FFG facility located at 901 W. Hillcrest Boulevard, the site of the alleged unsafe conditions, this morning. However, when the inspector sought entry, FFG denied consent for the inspection and explicitly refused the inspector entry to the facility. The inspector advised us that FFG's refusal to grant access means Cal/OSHA will need to obtain a warrant to gain access to the facility, a process that may take several days or longer.

FFG's refusal to admit safety inspectors would be troubling for any employer. For this employer, it is alarming. Workplace safety inspections depend on inspectors' ability to observe conditions as workers actually experience them — and the hazards documented at FFG's facilities are precisely the kind that can be quickly altered, staged, or hidden once a company knows an inspection is coming. FFG's denial of access raises serious concerns that the company may be attempting to clean up or conceal unsafe conditions in order to evade accountability, rather than to correct those conditions and protect its workers. Whatever procedural rights FFG may believe it has, a company operating on public airport property under a City permit should be opening its doors to safety regulators — not closing them.

FFG's refusal to cooperate with Cal/OSHA by allowing its inspector to visit the facility is also at odds with FFG's own public statements on the matter. In an article published by CNN this morning concerning the complaint, FFG is quoted as stating: We are conducting a thorough review of the allegations and are cooperating with the appropriate regulatory authorities." See Maureen O'Hare, "Maggots and cockroaches seen at airline catering facility, staff allege," *CNN*, August 7, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/07/travel/maggots-cockroaches-mold-airline-catering-facility> We have difficulty seeing how FFG's claim to be cooperating with appropriate authorities — which, in this case, clearly means Cal/OSHA, the body to which the complaint was addressed and which was conducting an investigation — can be considered anything other than a brazen misrepresentation.

We would also like to address a comment reportedly made by a LAWA representative in the same CNN article. The article states: "When contacted by CNN, Los Angeles World Airports, which oversees LAX, said, 'Because this is a matter before Cal/OSHA, LAWA is not in a position to comment on the case.'" As you know, FFG's license with LAWA is explicitly conditioned on compliance with applicable worker-protection laws, including health and safety rules. Moreover, earlier this year, the Office of the Mayor publicly called for an investigation in response to earlier safety-related complaints concerning Flying Food Group. Thus, workplace safety laws and cooperation with inspectors charged with ensuring compliance at this LAWA-licensed facility are very much matters of concern for LAWA and the Board of Airport Commissioners. We disagree strongly with any suggestion to the contrary and, again, implore your office and BOAC to take these matters (including FFG's ongoing refusal to cooperate with Cal/OSHA) with the seriousness they deserve.

FFG's record makes the stakes plain. On May 20, 2026, Cal/OSHA issued new Citations and Notifications of Penalty to FFG for workplace safety violations discovered during inspections of both of its facilities serving LAX (Inspection Nos. 1864909 and 1861761), carrying total proposed penalties of \$74,000. These included four "serious" citations — among them, at each facility, a serious violation for failure to ensure that the cold storage room had a door openable from the inside, required warning signage, and an electrically operated audible and visible alarm system accessible from inside the room (T8CCR §3249(a)), along with serious citations for failure to provide emergency eyewash and body-flush facilities at a battery charging station (T8CCR §5185(n)) and failure to guard the gear and sprocket chain drive on a commercial dishwasher (T8CCR §4075(a)). Cal/OSHA found the same cold-storage entrapment hazard — workers potentially unable to exit a cold storage room and without any alarm system to signal for help — at both FFG facilities serving LAX, reflecting a pattern of safety deficiency rather than an isolated incident.

That was the second and third time FFG has been cited for failing to ensure that cold storage rooms at its LAX facilities can be opened from the inside. In August 2023, Cal/OSHA cited FFG for six violations of workplace safety law, including failing to ensure that freezer doors could “open properly from the inside by the employees” and locking a facility exit door from the outside on the day of a planned worker picket line. FFG contested those citations for more than two years before agreeing to a February 2026 Settlement Order affirming them, with some modifications, and paying fines.

Yet, in the meantime, the company did not correct the cold-storage hazard — and on January 22, 2026, during a fire at the Inglewood facility, two workers were found locked inside a cold storage room whose entrance door had been chained shut from the outside, after more than 300 coworkers had evacuated. The workers had banged on the door for ten to fifteen minutes before a supervisor heard them and let them out. The San Francisco Standard published an article on April 29, 2026 regarding the January entrapment incident entitled *Chained shut: Airline food workers describe being locked in cooler as fire raged outside*. The article can be viewed here: <https://sfstandard.com/2026/04/29/lax-sfo-airline-food-workers-locked-in-fire/>

As you know, FFG now operates at LAX on a temporary extension of a permit that expired on June 30 of this year. A permittee with a record of affirmed and repeat safety violations that responds to new safety complaints by barring the door to safety regulators is not honoring the obligations that come with the privilege of operating at LAX. We therefore urge LAWA to: (1) immediately contact FFG and press the company to provide Cal/OSHA full and prompt access to its facilities; (2) require FFG to explain to LAWA, in writing, the circumstances of and justification for the denial of access; and (3) take FFG’s conduct toward safety regulators into account in evaluating the company’s temporary extension and any renewal of its permit.

We appreciate your timely attention and response to this letter.

Best regards,

/s/ *Jeremy Blasi*

Jeremy Blasi
General Counsel
UNITE HERE Local 11

cc: Board of Airport Commissioners
 Honorable Mayor Karen Bass
 Honorable Los Angeles City Councilmembers