



News for Immediate Release

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Departments of Agriculture, General Services Express Frustration After Latest Capitol Cafeteria Inspection

Additional Inspections Reinforce Importance of Proper Training, Need for Stronger Food Safety Statutes

Harrisburg – The departments of Agriculture and General Services expressed frustration and disappointment today after an unannounced walk-through inspection of the Capitol cafeteria on Monday, Jan. 25, found violations by its operator, Aramark.

According to Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, the walk-through was intended to ensure Aramark was implementing proper food safety protocols and procedures. None of the violations found required the facility to close under state law.

Among the violations were shortcomings in basic food safety requirements, including hand-washing and temperature control for foods on the hot and cold serving lines. The departments required immediate action to correct these violations, including the disposal of food.

“We are disappointed in the number of violations found on Jan. 25, especially after Aramark assured us that they had improved their operations after the state closed the facility last month,” said Redding. “The Capitol cafeteria will be treated no differently than any other eating establishment throughout the state because Pennsylvanians deserve to eat in a safe environment wherever they are.

“With violations such as we found on Jan. 25, we require that the operators take corrective action before the establishment could re-open. When we re-inspected the facility the next day, Aramark had corrected most of those violations and addressed the remaining matters while our food safety inspectors were on-site. We will continue to maintain a vigilant presence at the site to ensure they continue meet Pennsylvania’s food safety standards,” added Redding.

Redding noted that the department will continue to conduct unannounced inspections on a monthly basis for at least the next six months. He also stressed the need to update Pennsylvania’s food safety laws to avoid similar situations in the future.

"This situation underscores the need for stronger statutes regarding food safety," said Redding. "We implore the Senate to vote on House Bill 174 to give the department stronger authority to act when eating and drinking establishments are not being inspected."

"We continue to be frustrated by Aramark's lack of attention to detail since the violations found on Jan. 25 could easily have been corrected," said DGS Secretary James Creedon. "It was made very clear to Aramark that they are accountable for managing the Capitol Cafeteria properly, maintaining a clean food preparation environment, and training staff to follow proper protocols. We reiterated that if the violations were not corrected by Tuesday morning, the cafeteria would not open and their contract would be in serious jeopardy."

Both the initial report from Monday afternoon and the final report on Tuesday morning are available on the Department of Agriculture's Web site, www.agriculture.state.pa.us. Select "e-services" and click "Food Safety Inspection Results."

The departments of Agriculture and General Services will continue to work cooperatively to ensure that proper food safety and food handling procedures are being followed in the Capitol Cafeteria.

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