

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Steven Bellone
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

August 8, 2018

Rebecca Philbert,
President & CEO
Best Market
1 Lexington Avenue
Bethpage, New York 11714

Dear Ms. Philbert,

As Suffolk County Executive, I take our responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of constituents, including the economic stability of the communities in which they and their families live and work, very seriously. With 24 locations on Long Island, Best Market has great impact on our region in terms of access to healthy foods, employment, and economic investment.

It has come to my attention that Best Market workers are coming together, with support from the Coalition for Sustainable Retail Jobs and others, in an effort to improve their lives and working conditions. Since a majority of your workers are also Suffolk County constituents, my staff and I recently had the privilege of meeting with them. However, what we learned from speaking to these dedicated men and women is somewhat disconcerting.

The workers we spoke with told us that they are earning substantially less at your stores than they might earn at other supermarkets in our area for comparable work. Due to lower wages and unstable hours, many struggle every day to pay their bills, face housing insecurity and are unable to afford the healthcare plan offered to employees by Best Market. As a result, they turn to public assistance, and additional part time jobs to make ends meet. Workers also shared that they are not adequately trained to handle machinery and equipment that is not part of their “scope of work” and that they are sometimes required to perform these tasks, which on several occasions has resulted in unsafe working conditions with serious injuries to some workers.

While we understand and recognize that Best Market has made some improvements in response to the workers collective action, it is important to the economic viability of our communities that your company provide fair benefits and wages. I urge you to be sympathetic to the rights of your workers who are working together in an attempt to build better lives for themselves and their families. The men and women who work in Best Market's stores have significantly contributed to the overall success of your company and therefore deserve to be fairly compensated for their hard work and dedication.

Just as Best Market is a central part of our community, each of your workers is our neighbor, friend and a vital part of our region's success.

My administration has committed to promoting economic sustainability which includes maintaining the standard of living and way of life in Suffolk County. It is our hope that your organization will embrace this mission and work with all other partners and stakeholders to accomplish this very important goal.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and we hope that we can count on Best Market to be a partner in our region's shared future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Bellone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and last name "Bellone" clearly distinguishable.

Steven Bellone
Suffolk County Executive