

Tyson Settles Greenwashing Lawsuit

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Last year, we [posted](#) that the Environmental Working Group (“EWG”) had filed a lawsuit against Tyson Foods in DC Superior Court, accusing the country’s second-largest meat company of falsely claiming it will achieve net-zero by 2050 and misrepresenting its industrial beef products as “climate-smart.” (JBS—the country’s first-largest meat company—just [settled](#) a lawsuit over similar claims this month.)

Under the terms of the settlement, for the next five years, Tyson generally cannot make claims about:

- its “ambition, pledge, commitment, or ability” to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by a certain date;
- its “climate-smart” beef program or that its products will have lower greenhouse gas emissions than conventional beef; or
- its products being “climate smart” or “climate friendly”

unless an expert mutually agreed upon by the parties verifies that the claims have been substantiated and are valid. The settlement amount is confidential.

The term “substantiated” in the context of the settlement “means satisfactorily demonstrating a reasonable probability that the stated goals and aspirations (the Claims) are factually and practically achievable and not merely illusory, and that Tyson has taken, is taking, or will take demonstrable steps adequate to reach its stated goal.”

This settlement underscores a meaningful contrast with the JBS agreement announced earlier this month. As we [reported](#), under the New York Attorney General’s settlement, JBS may continue to reference its net zero ambitions, but only if those statements are expressly framed as aspirational “goals” rather than firm “pledges” or “commitments,” and if any described actions are accompanied by specific, verifiable steps.

Tyson’s settlement with EWG, by comparison, establishes a far more restrictive regime: for the next five years, Tyson is prohibited from making net zero or “climate-smart” beef claims unless the claims are first reviewed and substantiated by a mutually agreed independent expert. As a result, JBS can continue to articulate its goals with careful wording and annual compliance reviews, whereas Tyson cannot reenter this space without external scientific validation.

The contrast between the Tyson and JBS outcomes illustrates that regulators and private challengers are willing to impose tailored—and sometimes stringent—conditions on how emissions goals can be communicated. Going forward, companies should continue to expect heightened scrutiny of sustainability messaging, greater insistence on independent expert validation, and a growing risk of greenwashing challenges if disclosures are not backed by demonstrable progress and transparent methodology.