

March 12, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The Farm Workforce Modernization Act was passed with bipartisan support by the House of Representatives in the 116th Congress and represents the lengthy cooperative and negotiated efforts of agricultural employers and labor unions. This same bill with minimal updates was reintroduced on March 3, 2021. The undersigned groups, representing a broad cross-section of agriculture and its allies, urge you to again advance this same bill through the House to address the agricultural workforce crisis affecting our nation's farms, and ultimately, our food security.

A stable, legal workforce is needed to ensure the United States will continue to produce an abundant, safe, and affordable food supply. Every farm employee engaged in high-value, labor-intensive crop and livestock production sustains two-to-three off-farm jobs. The critical shortage of these employees not only constrains our farmers and ranchers, but also restricts our global economic competitiveness, hinders local economies, and curbs jobs. As foreign producers take advantage of our workforce labor shortage and gain market share, America will export more of our food production and thousands of these farm-dependent jobs.

Additionally, wage volatility in the H-2A guestworker program makes it extremely difficult for farmers to use the program, as it makes the already expensive and somewhat burdensome program erratic in its price inflation. The recent release of the 2021 Adverse Effect Wage Rates (AEWRs) has once again suddenly increased farmers' labor costs by an average of 5%, with some absorbing increases of nearly 9%, all while revenues for agricultural goods continue to diminish. These AEWR increases far outpace average wage growth across the broader U.S. economy during the same two-year span.

The unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic has further crippled agriculture and increased production costs. The loss of markets, interruption of supply chain logistics, an increasingly insufficient number of employees, and greater price volatility are just a few of the many challenges the pandemic has brought to the industry. All the while, agricultural employers have been resilient, striving to ensure a safe workspace for their employees and serving as a reliable source of jobs. No matter, with production and labor costs far outpacing revenues, agricultural employers will simply not be able to remain in business.

The House must pass legislation that preserves agriculture's experienced workforce by allowing current farm employees to earn legal status and continue to support America's agricultural

industry. This must also include an agricultural worker visa program that provides access to a legal and reliable workforce moving forward. This visa program should be more accessible, predictable, and flexible to meet the needs of producers, including those with year-round labor needs such as dairy and livestock, which currently do not have meaningful access to any program.

While the bill does include some provisions concerning to the agricultural community, we are committed to working together throughout the legislative process to address these issues. It is vital to move the Farm Workforce Modernization Act through the House as a significant step in addressing our labor crisis so American agriculture can continue to feed our nation and the world.

Sincerely,

African-American Farmers of California
Ag Valley Cooperative, Non-Stock
AgCountry Farm Credit Services
Agribusiness Henderson County (NC)
Agricultural Council of California
Agri-Mark, Inc.
Alabama Nursery and Landscape Association
Almond Alliance
Amalgamated Sugar Company
American AgCredit
American AgriWomen
American Beekeeping Federation
American Honey Producers Association
American Mushroom Institute
American Pistachio Growers
American Seed Trade Association
American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)
AmericanHort
Arizona Dairy Producers Trade Association
Arizona Nursery Association
Associated Milk Producers Inc.
Aurora Organic Dairy
Bluebird Bonanza Farms
Bongards' Creameries
CalChamber
California Apple Commission
California Association of Food Banks
California Association of Wheat Growers
California Avocado Commission
California Blueberry Association
California Blueberry Commission

California Canning Peach Association
California Cherry Growers and Industry Association
California Citrus Mutual
California Dairies, Inc.
California Date Commission
California Dried Plum Board
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Fig Advisory Board
California Fresh Fruit Association
California Pear Growers Association
California Seed Association
California State Floral Association
California Strawberry Commission
California Sweet Potato Council
California Tomato Growers Association
California Walnut Commission
California Warehouse Association
California Women for Agriculture
Cayuga Milk Ingredients
Center for Dairy Excellence (Pennsylvania)
Certified American Grown
Chobani
CHS Inc.
Co-Alliance Cooperative, Inc.
CoBank
Colorado Dairy Farmers
Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Association
Colorado Potato Legislative Association
Cooperative Milk Producers Association
Cooperative Producers, Inc.
Costa Farms
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Dairy Producers of New Mexico
Dairy Producers of Utah
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
Empire State Potato Growers
Far West Agribusiness Association
Farm Credit East
Farmers Cooperative
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
Federation of Employers and Workers of America
First District Association
Florida Agri-Women
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association

Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association
Florida Strawberry Growers Association
Florida Tomato Exchange
Food Northwest
Food Producers of Idaho
Foremost Farms USA
Frenchman Valley Farmers Cooperative Inc.
Fresh Harvest/Steve Scaroni (CA)
Fresno County Farm Bureau (CA)
Georgia Green Industry Association
Georgia Milk Producers, Inc.
Georgia Urban Ag Council
Glanbia Nutritionals
Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Commission
Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Growers Association
Idaho Apple Commission
Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry
Idaho Bankers Association
Idaho Cattleman's Association
Idaho Dairymen's Association
Idaho Eastern Oregon Seed Association
Idaho Grain Producers Association
Idaho Grower Shippers Association
Idaho Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Idaho Hop Growers Association
Idaho Milk Products
Idaho Mint Growers Association
Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association
Idaho Onion Growers Association
Idaho Potato Commission
Idaho Sugarbeet Growers
Idaho-Oregon Fruit & Vegetable Association
Illinois Green Industry Association
Indiana Dairy Producers
Indiana Nursery and Landscape Association
Indiana Outdoor Maintenance Alliance
International Dairy Foods Association
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives
Iowa Nursery & Landscape Association
Iowa State Dairy Association
Kansas Dairy Association
Land O'Lakes, Inc.
Laurel Springs Nursery, LLC (NC)
Leitz Farms LLC/Fred Leitz (MI)
Lone Star Milk Producers
Madera County Farm Bureau (CA)

Maine Landscape & Nursery Association
Maine Potato Board
Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association, Inc.
Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, Inc.
MBG Marketing
McCain USA Inc.
Michigan Apple Association
Michigan Greenhouse Growers Council
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association
Mid Kansas Cooperative
Midwest Apple Improvement Association
Midwest Dairy Coalition
Milk Producers Council
Milk Producers of Idaho
Minnesota Milk Producers Association
Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association
Missouri Green Industry Alliance
Montana Nursery and Landscape Association
Monterey County Farm Bureau (CA)
Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association
National All-Jersey Inc.
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Council of Agricultural Employers
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Milk Producers Federation
National Onion Association
National Potato Council
National Young Farmers Coalition
Nebraska Cooperative Council
Nebraska State Dairy Association
New England Apple Council
New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association
New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association
New Mexico Chapter, Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Association
New York Apple Association
New York Farm Bureau
New York State Flower Industries
New York State Vegetable Growers Association
Nezperce Prairie Grass Growers Association
Nisei Farmers League
North American Blueberry Council
North Carolina Dairy Producers Association

North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association
North Carolina Potato Association
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives
Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Inc.
Northern Family Farms LLP, Merrilan, WI
Northern Plains Potato Growers Association
Northwest Ag Cooperatives Council
Northwest Dairy Association/Darigold
Northwest Horticultural Council
Ohio Dairy Producers Association
Ohio Fruit Growers Marketing Association
Ohio Landscape Association
Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association
Oklahoma Nursery & Landscape Association
Olive Growers Council of California
Oneida-Madison Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregon Potato Commission
Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association
PennAg Industries Association
Pennsylvania Cooperative Potato Growers
Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association
Plant California Alliance
Potato Growers of Michigan, Inc
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.
Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania
Reiter Affiliated Companies
Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association
San Diego County Farm Bureau (CA)
Scioto Cooperative Milk Producers' Association
Select Milk Producers, Inc.
Simplot
South Central Idaho Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
South Dakota Association of Cooperatives
South Dakota Dairy Producers
Southeast Milk Inc.
Southern States Cooperative
Stanislaus County Farm Bureau (CA)
Sunkist Growers, Inc.
Sunmaid Growers of California
Sunsweet Growers Inc.
Tennessee Farmers Cooperative
Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council
Texas Association of Dairymen
Texas Citrus Mutual

Texas Nursery & Landscape Association
Tillamook County Creamery Association
Tree Top
Tulare County Farm Bureau (CA)
Turfgrass Producers International
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Durum Growers Association
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United Dairymen of Arizona
United Fresh Produce Association
United Potato Growers of America
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.
Utah Apple marketing Board
Utah Horticulture Association
Utah Nursery & Landscape Association
Utah Tart Cherry Marketing Board
Valley Fig Growers
Valley Vision (CA)
Ventura County Agricultural Association (CA)
Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance
Virginia Apple Growers Association
Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
Virginia State Dairymen's Association
Washington Growers League
Washington State Dairy Federation
Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association
Washington State Potato Commission
Washington State Tree Fruit Association
West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
Western Growers Association
Western Plant Health Association
Western States Dairy Producers Association
Western United Dairies
Wine Institute
WineAmerica
Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association
Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association
Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association

cc: U.S. House of Representatives