

October 3, 2017

Honorable Bob Goodlatte
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte,

On behalf of the California Strawberry Commission (CSC), we thank you for introducing the Agricultural Guestworker Act (Ag Act) and ask for your colleagues support when the bill comes before the Judiciary Committee. This bill addresses the critical shortage of legally authorized and experienced agricultural workers.

California strawberry farmers grow nearly 90 percent of the nation's strawberries, employing over 55,000 people on farms and contributing over \$3 billion annually to rural communities.

In past years we have estimated that over \$100,000,000 of strawberry fruit went unharvested due to a lack of labor. This year, we experienced a 20% labor shortage and have been forced to utilize the outdated H-2A program.

We are encouraged by key concepts included in the guest worker legislation. The Ag Act represents agriculture's ongoing effort to work with the Judiciary Committee to achieve a solution that ensures a secure, legal workforce in agriculture today and in the future.

We recognize the complexities of crafting a solution that will protect U.S. agriculture, support American jobs and ensure the integrity of the Nation's immigration system. We commend you and your staff for the improvements made thus far to secure a balance between the need for a legal workforce in agriculture today and in the future. As the process unfolds, we look forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats on this legislation, which will lead to enactment of a solution that ensures agriculture producers have access to a legal and stable workforce.

Farmworkers support the viability of all segments of U.S. agricultural industries which accounts for \$992 billion of the GDP and provides for 21 million jobs.

The time is upon Congress to act as inaction puts American jobs at risk. We respectfully request the support of your colleagues when the Ag Act comes before the Committee.

Sincerely,



Mark Martinez
VP Public Policy
California Strawberry Commission