

California Walnut Commission

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October 9, 2017

Honorable Bob Goodlatte
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
45 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte,

The California Walnut Commission applauds your introduction of the Agricultural Guestworker Act (Ag Act), legislation that is long overdue in securing a stable, legal workforce for agriculture today and in the future.

California walnut growers produce 99% of the nation's walnuts, employing over 85,000 workers directly and indirectly, who contribute to the \$1.2 billion (farm gate) industry. Our 4,800 growers and 98 handlers (processors) will benefit greatly from the proposed provision in the legislation to extend guest worker status to year-round agricultural employers, a significant portion of our labor force.

We commend you and your staff for your tireless efforts in finding solutions which balance the complexity of needs and protect U.S. agriculture, while supporting American jobs and ensuring the integrity of the nation's immigration system. We are pleased to support this legislation as it moves through the process and look forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats in establishing a permanent resolution.

We encourage the Judiciary Committee to take swift action as our competitiveness and U.S. jobs remain at risk without action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle M. Connelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Michelle McNeil Connelly
Chief Executive Officer
California Walnut Commission