



Craig McNamara
Board President
Owner, Sierra Orchards

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Kerry Tucker, CEO
Nuffer, Smith, Tucker,
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The Honorable Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture recently convened a meeting focusing on agricultural labor and immigration reform. These two issues are critical to the economic well being of our agricultural sector and to California's economy as a whole. These issues impact not only farmers and ranchers, but agricultural workers and farming communities.

At the federal level we need action to address comprehensive immigration reform to recognize the reality that not only exists in the agricultural sector, but other economic sectors of our state as well. The University of California estimates that approximately two-thirds of crop workers in California are unauthorized. In the absence of a comprehensive national solution, a sectorial approach such as AgJobs, should be considered to address the continuing hardships immigration policies are having on farm workers and the agricultural industry. On this sensitive issue, agricultural, farm worker and faith-based organizations are united on the need for immigration reform.

Without a federal solution, the board believes that several steps can be taken at the state level to improve the health, safety, and livelihood of agricultural workers. The following are the recommendations of the Board:

- **Driver License/Permits:** Allow undocumented residents to apply for either a California driver license or driver permit to facilitate transportation to/from work locations. Currently agricultural workers are dependent upon group transportation, county transportation services, or other means of transportation to reach work sites. In New Mexico and Washington state farm workers have the ability to obtain a driver license by showing proof of residency and not proof of citizenship. Prior to 1993 California allowed undocumented residents to obtain driver licenses until citizenship requirements were placed into effect in that year. In 2003, legislation was signed in California that removed the proof of residency requirement, but was repealed in 2004 before the law went into effect. Providing undocumented residents a legal ability to drive enhances public safety and provides them with more options to pursue work across the state.



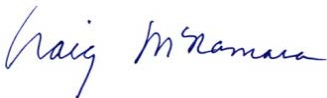
- Farm Worker Housing and Transportation Taskforce: Through an Executive Order convene an interagency task force consisting of the secretaries of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the Transportation Agency, and the State and Consumer Services Agency to address housing and transportation issues related to farm workers. The task force should also include within its membership public individuals who are uniquely familiar with challenges surrounding housing and transportation issues for farm workers. The task force should be directed to develop recommendations for policy changes and implementation that specifically addresses the shortage of safe housing options for seasonal and year-round agricultural workers.

We respectfully submit these recommendations for your consideration. These recommendations will help address and alleviate some of the key constraints facing farm workers and employers.

In addition to the above recommendations, the Board also authorized a letter to the California Congressional Delegation encouraging legislative action concerning the rural definition within section 520 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1490). Unless an amendment to the rural definition is completed, more than 100 rural communities in California will lose access to federal rural housing programs facilitated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency. These housing programs are an important resource for agricultural workers and employers and should be maintained.

As the top agricultural producing state in the nation, with crops that demand a high degree of hand labor, California has the most at stake in playing a leadership role in helping to shape the national discussion on these issues and we are pleased to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Craig McNamara
President

cc: Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Secretary Marty Morgenstern, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency