



August 1, 2013

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

The undersigned groups, representing a broad cross section of agriculture, urge you to support passage of immigration legislation to address the labor crisis facing American agriculture. A stable, legal workforce is needed to ensure farmers and ranchers have the ability to continue producing an abundant, safe and affordable food supply.

The effects of agriculture's critical shortage of labor reach far beyond the farm gate, negatively impacting our economic competitiveness, local economies, and jobs. Economists have found that every farm worker engaged in high-value, labor-intensive crop and livestock production sustains two to three off-farm jobs. As foreign producers take advantage of our labor shortage and gain market share, America will export not only our food production but also thousands of these farm-dependent jobs. Securing a reliable and skilled workforce is essential not only for the agricultural industry but for the U.S. economy as a whole.

The House must pass legislation that preserves agriculture's experienced workforce by allowing current farm workers to earn legal status. For future needs, legislation must create an agricultural worker visa program that provides access to a legal and reliable workforce moving forward. This visa program needs to be market-based and have the flexibility to meet the needs of producers, including those with year-round labor needs, such as dairy and livestock. The agreement reached by agriculture employers and worker groups earlier this year helps meet the labor needs of agriculture, both now and in the future.

It is vital for the House to move legislation forward so that Congress can enact meaningful immigration reform this year.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Council of California
Agricultural Retailers Association
Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative
Alabama Farmers Cooperative
American Beekeeping Federation
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Honey Producers Association
American Mushroom Institute
American Nursery & Landscape Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Sugar Cane League
Arizona Farm Bureau
Aurora Dairy
Calcot, Ltd.
California Association of Winegrape Growers
California Avocado Commission
California Canning Peach Association
California Date Commission
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Fig Advisory Board
California Grape and Tree Fruit League
California Strawberry Commission
California Walnut Commission
California Women for Agriculture
CoBank
Colorado Farm Bureau
Cooperative Network
Dairy Farmers of America
Dairylea Cooperative, Inc.
Farm Credit Bank of Texas
Farm Credit East
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA)
Georgia Green Industry Association
GROWMARK, Inc.
Gulf Citrus Growers Association
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
Indiana Farm Bureau
Kansas Cooperative Council
Land O'Lakes, Inc.

Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation
MBG Marketing/ Michigan Blueberry Growers Association
Michigan Farm Bureau
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Michigan Processing Apple Growers
Minnesota Farm Bureau
National Cotton Council
National Council of Agricultural Employers
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc.
National Milk Producers Federation
National Peach Council
National Potato Council
New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation
New Jersey Farm Bureau
New York Farm Bureau
North American Blueberry Council
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives
Northwest Dairy Association
Northwest Farm Credit Services
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Cherry Growers, Inc.
Pacific Coast Producers
Pacific Ridge
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Society of American Florists
South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
South Dakota Wheat Growers
State Agriculture and Rural Leaders (SARL)
Sunkist Growers
Sun-Maid Growers of California
Sunsweet Growers, Inc.
Sweet Potato Council of California
Teays River Investments
Texas Citrus Mutual
Texas Cotton Ginners Association
Texas Farm Bureau
Texas International Produce Association
Texas Nursery & Landscape Association
Texas Vegetable Association
The National Grange
U.S. Apple Association
United Dairymen of Arizona
United Fresh Produce Association
United Producers, Inc.

USA Farmers
Valley Fig Growers
Washington Farm Bureau
Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Welch's Foods Inc., A Cooperative
Western AgCredit
Western Growers Association
Western United Dairymen
Yankee Farm Credit
Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association

cc: U.S. House of Representatives