

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Farm Bureau of Ventura County Condemns ICE Activity in Oxnard

“ICE Threatens Our Industry, Our Economy, and Our Community”

VENTURA COUNTY, CA —

The Farm Bureau of Ventura County, representing hundreds of farmers, ranchers, and agricultural businesses across the region, strongly condemns the actions taken by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Oxnard this morning. Reports indicate that ICE agents attempted to enter a local packing facility without a judicial warrant, conducted operations in agricultural fields, and initiated vehicle stops on roads frequently used by agricultural workers commuting to job sites.

As working producers and stewards of Ventura County’s \$2 billion agricultural economy, we know firsthand that our industry cannot function without the contributions of our workforce. These are people we rely on, respect, and work alongside every day. They are skilled professionals who bring deep experience and an extraordinary work ethic to Ventura County’s fields and ranches. Their labor is the reason our region is recognized as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

The conduct of ICE this morning, marked by racial profiling, intimidation, and attempts to enter private property without judicial authorization, constitutes an unacceptable escalation. This approach undermines constitutional rights and directly threatens the integrity of California’s agricultural economy.

Let us be unequivocal: racial profiling is illegal. Intimidation is not enforcement. Using fear to destabilize the workforce that powers our farms is a reckless and short-sighted tactic with far-reaching consequences. These actions erode community trust, disrupt harvests, and impose undue strain on operations large and small. When our workforce is afraid, fields go unharvested, packinghouses fall behind, and market supply chains, from local grocery stores to national retailers, are affected. This impacts every American who eats.

We urge swift and coordinated action at the local, state, and federal levels to safeguard farmworkers and ensure the continued strength of our agricultural industry.

Local Actions We Urge Ventura County and City Governments to Take:

- Law enforcement agencies must be trained on their constitutional responsibilities, including the right to decline unlawful orders from ICE, CBP, or other federal entities. The defense of “I was just following orders” is neither legally nor

morally sufficient. Officers must be empowered to uphold civil liberties, not violate them.

- The Ventura County Sheriff's Office should implement a policy to notify the Rapid Response Network (RRN) when ICE operations occur, similar to how fire departments notify the Red Cross during house fires. RRN offers legal assistance, emergency support, and trauma-informed care to affected families, resources essential to maintaining community stability.
- We recommend the County train designated staff that work throughout the county, such as Weights and Measure & Ag Commissioner staff to serve as legal observers during ICE operations. The presence of trained observers, who document and question from a safe distance, has been shown to deter unlawful detentions and reduce instances of racial profiling.

State Legislative Action Needed:

We call on California's Assemblymembers and State Senators to strengthen and expand protections for immigrant workers statewide. This includes:

- Standardized training for local agencies
- Stronger limits on cooperation with federal immigration enforcement
- Prohibitions against data-sharing or indirect involvement in ICE operations

Federal Oversight and De-escalation:

We urge our federal representatives to:

- Conduct immediate investigations into ICE activity in Ventura County
- Withhold funding from operations that violate constitutional protections
- Take legislative steps to reduce the militarization of immigration enforcement in agricultural communities

Farm Bureau members care deeply about their workers, not as abstract labor, but as human beings and valued community members who deserve dignity, safety, and respect. Ventura County agriculture depends on them. California's economy depends on them. America's food system depends on them.

We invite our colleagues in local government, especially the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, city councils, and departments with direct community interface, such as Human Services, the Farmworker Resource Program, and Public Health, to add their voices and leadership to this effort.

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