



June 13, 2018

Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy
2421 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable McCarthy,

As leadership prepares to consider immigration legislation, we urge the inclusion of an agricultural guestworker title to replace the current H-2A program with a more reliable and effective guestworker program. We believe Chairman Goodlatte's agricultural guestworker title as included in the Securing America's Future Act (H.R. 4760), supplemented by proposed revisions announced by him and his staff, provides a framework for an effective guestworker program.

As representatives of two of California's most labor-intensive crops, we can attest to the critical shortage of legally authorized and available farmworkers. The California strawberry industry, valued at \$2.5 billion, requires 55,000 farmworkers annually; California's 5,900 winegrape growers directly employ 34,600 workers and produce an annual crop valued at greater than \$2.5 billion annually.

Our farmers and the industries they support are dependent on U.S. agricultures' access to a legal, secure and stable workforce. Agriculture has relied on an influx of guestworkers to harvest crops and fill on-farm jobs for decades; today, an estimated 50-percent of all farmworkers nationwide are undocumented and subject to deportation. That said, we do not take the complexities of immigration lightly. Each year that Congress fails to pass legislation providing an effective guestworker visa program our industries are a step closer to failure.

H.R. 4760 would offer significant relief to U.S. farmers by addressing shortfalls of the current agricultural guestworker visa program (H-2A) by replacing it with a new (H-2C) guestworker visa program. This new program would protect the U.S. economy and U.S. agriculture by authorizing legal visas for current agricultural workers and future agricultural guestworkers.

It is urgent that Congress seizes this opportunity to advance an agricultural guestworker visa program before it is too late. 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 your support for the inclusion of language to authorize an agricultural guestworker program in any immigration measure brought before the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. AmRhein
Chairman of the Board
California Strawberry Commission

Bill Berryhill
Chairman of the Board
California Association of Winegrape Growers