



March 17, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip
U.S. House of Representatives
H- 48, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader McCarthy, Minority Leader Pelosi and Minority Whip Hoyer:

The undersigned organizations and businesses, representing a broad cross section of agriculture, write to express and explain our strong opposition to H.R. 1147, the Legal Workforce Act, which was reported out of the Judiciary Committee.

Mandatory E-Verify would have a devastating impact on our industry in the absence of a legislative solution for agriculture's labor needs. If the House decides to move forward on mandatory E-Verify without also moving a solution for agriculture, such action would cause irreparable harm to farmers across America. Immigration enforcement without a program flexible enough to address the labor needs of fruit, vegetable, dairy, nursery, and other farms, and ranches, will result in many U.S. farmers, their farm employees, and many in their rural communities losing their livelihoods as well as an overall decrease in U.S. agricultural production.

This legislation's effect would extend far beyond the farm gate. If there is no one available to pick the crops or milk the cows, industry sectors that operate upstream and downstream of farm production and harvest will be adversely impacted as well.

Studies have shown that each of the nearly two million hired farm employees, who work in labor intensive agriculture, supports 2 to 3 fulltime American jobs in the food processing,

transportation, farm equipment, marketing, retail and other sectors. Mandatory E-Verify without workable labor solutions for agriculture puts these American jobs, and the economies of communities across the country, in jeopardy.

There is no other industry with greater workforce demographic challenges and foreign labor reliance than agriculture. A longer phase-in and/or an exemption from E-Verify is a well-intentioned acknowledgment that agriculture confronts a precarious labor situation, but it does not move us any closer to the permanent solutions we desperately need. Instead, they place a larger target on the backs of American producers who are following the letter of the law today.

It was encouraging to hear the Committee spend significant time discussing agriculture's unique workforce challenges during the markup. We remain committed to working with the Judiciary Committee and other members of Congress on legislation that addresses agriculture's labor needs. If this Congress were to pass reform legislation that truly addresses agriculture's workforce challenges, farmers would welcome an E-Verify system that is simple, efficient, effective, and certain. However, the negative risk of an enforcement-only strategy with no surety of reform that provides a work authorization for experienced agricultural workers and a new, flexible guest worker program for long term stability leaves farmers and ranchers no other option than to oppose this bill.

In closing, the AWC remains unequivocally opposed to H.R. 1147, the Legal Workforce Act as it does not also address the agricultural workforce crisis. Instead, we believe the path forward is clear—Congress must pass a solution for agriculture that addresses both our current agricultural workforce and creates a new guest worker program to meet future needs, and only then implement a mandatory E-Verify program.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Council of California
Agricultural Retailers Association
Agri-Mark, Inc.
American Agri-Women
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Fruit and Vegetable Processors and Grower Coalition
American Honey Producers Association
American Mushroom Institute
American Sugar Cane League
AmericanHort
Apricot Producers of California
Arizona Nursery Association
Associated Milk Producers Inc.
Bongards' Creameries

CA Women for Agriculture
California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers
California Association of Winegrape Growers
California Canning Peach Association
California Fresh Fruit Association
California Sweet Potato Council
California Tomato Growers Association
Co-Alliance
CoBank
Colorado Nursery & Greenhouse Association
Cooperative Credit Company
Cooperative Milk Producers Association
Cooperative Network
Cortland Bulk Milk Producers Cooperative
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Dairymen's Marketing Cooperative, Inc.
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association
Farm Credit Council
Farm Credit East
Farm Credit West
Farmers Cooperative Creamery
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
First District Association
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association
Foremost Farms USA
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
Georgia Green Industry Association
Georgia Watermelon Association
GROWMARK, Inc.
Gulf Citrus Growers Association
Idaho Dairymen's Association
Idaho Nursery & Landscape Association
Illinois Green Industry Association
Indiana Nursery & Landscape Association
International Dairy Foods Association
Kentucky Nursery and Landscape Association
Land O'Lakes, Inc.
Lone Star Milk Producers

MainJoy Unlimited, Inc.
Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Maryland Nursery, Landscape, and Greenhouse Association
Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association
MBG Marketing/The Blueberry People
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association
Michigan Processing Apple Growers
MidAmerica Food Processors Association
Mid-West Dairymen's Company
Milk Producers Council
Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association
Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association
National All-Jersey
National Association of Egg Farmers
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA)
National Christmas Tree Association
National Cotton Council
National Cotton Ginners Association
National Council of Agricultural Employers
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Grape Cooperative Inc.
National Milk Producers Federation
National Onion Association
National Peach Council
National Potato Council
New York State Vegetable Growers Association's
NORPAC Foods, Inc.
North American Blueberry Council
Northeast Agribusiness and Feed alliance
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives
Northeast Dairy Foods Association, Inc.
Northeast Dairy Producers Association (NEDPA)
Northwest Dairy Association
Northwest Farm Credit Services
Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association
Oklahoma Nursery and Landscape Association
Oneida-Madison Milk Producers Cooperative Association

Oregon Association of Nurseries
Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.
Premier Milk Inc.
Reeves Farms of Baldwinsville New York
Remington Seeds, LLC
Rhode Island Nursery & Landscape Association
Salmen Farms
Scioto County Cooperative Milk Producers' Association
Select Milk Producers, Inc.
Society of American Florists
South Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association
South Dakota Wheat Growers
South East Dairy Farmers Association
Southeast Milk, Inc.
St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc.
Stevco, Inc.
Sun-Maid Growers of California
Sunsweet Growers, Inc.
Swiss Valley Farms Company
Teays River Investments
Texas International Produce Association
Texas Nursery & Landscape Association
Texas Vegetable Association
Tillamook County Creamery Association
Torrey Farms Inc.
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Sweet Potato Council
United Dairymen of Arizona
United Egg Producers
United Fresh Produce Association
United Potato Growers of America
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.
USA Farmers
Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association
Virginia Green Industry Council
Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
Virginia State Dairymen's Association
Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association

Welch Foods Inc., a Cooperative
Western Growers Association
Western United Dairymen
Wisconsin Green Industry Federation
Wisconsin Nursery and Landscape Association
Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association
Zia Milk Producers, Inc.

CC: U.S. House of Representatives