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December 23, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request for Expansion of the Farmworker Housing Assistance Tax Credit

Dear Governor Newsom:

Thank you for your leadership in protecting our farmworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we gear up to begin the new legislative session and budget process, however, I wanted to express my concern that the Farmworker Housing Assistance Tax Credit was not included in the expansion of the State's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) that occurred over the past two budget cycles. I therefore urge you, as part of the proposed Budget due to be announced in January, to extend the prior expansion of the LIHTC but that you also include a substantial increase in the amount of those funds designated for the Farmworker Housing Assistance Tax Credit.

California's farmworkers, who are overwhelming Latino/a, poor, and ill-housed, have experienced the double whammy impacts this past year of the pandemic on top of the State's continuing, deepening housing crisis. As essential workers on the frontlines of our food supply, farmworkers are being sickened by and dying from the virus at disproportionate rates—not only from exposure in the fields, but also from exposure due to crowded and/or unsanitary living conditions. It is unacceptable that the people who labor in our fields during a pandemic to put food on our tables in the comfort of our homes do not enjoy the same safety and comfort in their own homes.

To ensure more farmworkers have access to permanent and safe housing, and address the increased need following the COVID-19 pandemic, I request a substantial expansion of the California Farmworker Housing Assistance Tax Credit. The annual allotment of \$500,000 for these credits is far too little to support the large number of projects needed to deliver new, permanent, and safe housing for our farm and other agricultural workers. An expansion of the California Farmworker Housing Assistance Tax Credit program will speed up projects already in the pipeline and incentivize the accelerated development of new projects.

The State's LIHTC Program helps house low-income Californians by building more affordable rental developments. The Farmworker Housing Assistance Tax Credit, which has been a set-aside within the larger tax credit for many years, incentivizes the development of permanent housing for farm and agricultural workers. Both programs remain critical and more important than ever in the

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2021-2022 fiscal year. Programs like these allow individuals and families build a foundation of stability for themselves and for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with you this legislative session and through the upcoming budget process to deliver continued relief for farmworkers and California's other most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized "R" followed by a horizontal line and another "R".

ROBERT RIVAS
Assemblymember, 30th District

cc: The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly
The Honorable Toni Atkins, President Pro Tem, California State Senate
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
The Honorable David Chiu, Chair, Assembly Cmte. on Housing and Community Dev.
The Honorable Scott Weiner, Senate Housing Committee
The Honorable Andreas Borgeas, Senate Agriculture Committee
The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo, Chair, Latino Caucus, California Legislature
The Honorable Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer
The Honorable Betty Yee, California State Controller
Director Keely Martin Bosler, California Department of Finance
Director Tia Boatman Patterson, California Housing Finance Agency
Director Gustavo F. Velasquez, California Department of Housing and Community Dev.
Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture