



July 27, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor of the State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Additional protections for California's essential farmworkers**

Governor Newsom,

We appreciate the focus of your COVID-19 update on Friday, July 24 on essential workers and the vast majority of Latinx workers that are asked to risk their health and safety to keep food on tables of Californians. You spoke of additional safeguards<sup>1</sup> for essential agricultural workers, including:

- Safe isolation spaces for agricultural and farmworkers who test positive or were exposed to COVID-19
- Greater access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing
- Expanded outreach and communication campaign targeted to workers
- Targeting Cal/OSHA and the Labor Commissioner's Office investigations in high-risk industries, and your commitment to work with us on expedited enforcement authority

These protections and your commitment to continue working with the Legislature on other improvements will surely help combat this pandemic. However, there is still more that we can do today to protect workers who are desperate for relief<sup>2</sup>. With the fear and uncertainty around seeking official help<sup>3</sup>, we should also be expanding housing opportunities to those who have not yet been exposed to the virus – because packing six to eight adults into one hotel motel<sup>4</sup> room with the real economic anxiety and lagging contact

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<sup>1</sup> Governor Newsom Announces New Supports for California Workers  
<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/07/24/governor-newsom-announces-new-supports-for-california-workers/>

<sup>2</sup> Workers in the San Joaquin Valley ask the attorney general for support  
<https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2020/07/coronavirus-workers-pistachio-plant/>

<sup>3</sup> 'We can't prevent it': Farmworkers paid low wages fear coronavirus spread in crowded housing  
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-09/salinas-covoronavirus-monterey-county>

<sup>4</sup> Farmworkers Are Among Those at Highest Risk for COVID-19, Studies Show  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/covid-19-farmworkers-among-highest-risk-studies-show/>

tracing<sup>5</sup> is setting the table for additional virus spread. Additionally, Migrant Family Housing Centers should be kept open year-round to avoid exacerbating homelessness in the fall and winter, when spread of the virus could be even more rapid and overlap with flu season.

We are writing to you to request some additional improvements to protect farmworkers throughout the state. California must provide:

- Additional follow up and accountability for any industry or company not protecting their workers
- Increased accountability for counties in getting PPE to workers and ensure they are doing sufficient outreach and education
- Increased testing with rapid results, including pool testing where it can be used appropriately to ensure greater frequency of testing
- Culturally diverse contact tracing to connect with hard to reach communities
- Due to the incredibly high risk and actual rate of spread, housing for all agricultural workers, not just those determined to have been exposed
- Specific attention to counties with high need

The above listed items should be rolled out as soon as possible. We will continue to work with you and your Administration on legislation for any changes that need to happen statutorily, but given the stakes with this public health crisis, the items listed should be carried out immediately.

We honestly believe in your commitment to protect those frontline workers that have held us up in this unprecedented crisis, we look forward to continuing to partner in any way we can to carry out these crucial protections.

Sincerely,



SUSAN TALAMANTES EGGMAN  
Assemblymember, 13<sup>th</sup> District



ROBERT RIVAS  
Assemblymember, 30<sup>th</sup> District

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<sup>5</sup> When contact tracing fails: Testing delays thwart California COVID-19 trackers  
<https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article244449142.html>



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CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY  
Assemblymember, 4<sup>th</sup> District



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EDUARDO GARCIA  
Assemblymember, 56<sup>th</sup> District



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RUDY SALAS  
Assemblymember, 32<sup>nd</sup> District



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MELISSA HURTADO  
Senator, 14<sup>th</sup> District