

October 30, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20000

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Scott
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
468 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Including Relief for Farm Workers in Disaster Relief Legislation

Dear President Biden, Secretary Vilsack, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Scott, and Chairman Heinrich,

We are writing on behalf of the UFW Foundation, United Farm Workers, organizations that are serving communities affected by recent hurricanes, and allies, to respectfully urge that Congress pass and the President sign legislation that provides grants to charitable organizations that have experience delivering economic aid to farm workers who are suffering from disasters.

Combined, Hurricanes Helene and Milton are expected to cost over \$50 billion and be among the most costly of hurricanes in United States history. They have left communities devastated and struggling to meet basic, everyday needs like food, water, housing, and diapers and baby formula for families. This includes farm workers who labor to put food on our tables every day. For example, entire quintessential crops in Georgia like peaches, pecans, and green vegetables have been destroyed, dramatically affecting the current harvest season and expecting to put farm workers out of work for the next six to 12 months. Because of this, farm workers who put food on our tables are unable to put food on their own families' tables. These challenges are exacerbated by a lack of language access and a lack of accessible, trusted information by farm workers on where they can receive assistance.

Unfortunately, the historical norm is that during natural disasters, federal funding only goes to agricultural employers and does not reach farm workers, with very few exceptions. We ask that Congress and the Biden administration change this in any disaster relief package by including grants to charitable organizations that serve farm workers.

Indeed, when the Biden administration and Congress mobilized to address the lasting economic damage caused by COVID-19, you ensured that this included [relief](#) for farm workers, grocery store, and meatpacking workers, through charitable organizations. During a citrus freeze in 2008, the federal government responded to the subsequent economic damage by creating [grants](#) to charitable organizations to offer impacted farm workers emergency services.

Additionally, the Disaster Relief for Farm Workers Act ([H.R. 8765/S. 4545](#)), would create a model to ensure that assistance reaches farm workers who are affected by a hurricane, flood, drought, excessive heat, health crisis like a pandemic, and other covered disasters that cause workers to lose income or make them unable to work. Hurricanes Helene and Milton are the exact kinds of disasters that this Act contemplates, and the current suffering of farm workers is the exact kind of human harm and economic damage that this Act seeks to address.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge Congress and the Biden administration to continue your leadership by ensuring that farm workers, in addition to agricultural businesses, benefit from an upcoming disaster relief package.

Thank you,

Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina Organizations:

Davidson County Local Food Network
El Futuro es Nuestro
Farmworker Advocacy Network
Farmworker Association of Florida
Florida Legal Services, Inc.
GALEO Impact Fund
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights
National Association of Social Workers - Florida Chapter

National Association of Social Workers - North Carolina Chapter
National Association of Social Workers - Georgia Chapter
NC FIELD, Inc.
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina Farmworkers' Project
North Carolina Justice Center
Nourish Up
Rooted Reciprocity LLC
Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina
Spiderweb Acre
Student Action with Farmworkers
Sur Legal Collaborative
The Bridge International
The Guatemalan-Maya Center
Toxic Free NC
UFW Foundation
WNC Food Systems Coalition

National and Other Organizations:

A Better Balance
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, Inc.
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP)
Ayudando Latinos A Soñar, ALAS
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Campesinos Sin Fronteras
Care in Action
CASA DEL LLANO, INC
CATA - The Farmworker Support Committee
Center for Employment Training
Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.
Child Labor Coalition
Colonias Development Council
Farm Worker Ministry Northwest
Farmworker and Landscaper Advocacy Project
Farmworker Justice
Food & Water Watch
Hispanic Federation
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigration Hub
Impact Fund
La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Legal Aid Justice Center

Lideres Campesinas
MESA
MomsRising/ MamásConPoder
National Association of Social Workers
National Consumers League
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
PCUN
Puente de la Costa Sur
Slow Food USA
Slow Food USA Food and Farming Advisory Board
The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United)
UnidosUS
UNITE HERE
United Farm Workers
United Migrant Opportunities Services, Inc. (UMOS)
Workers Center of Central New York