

# North Carolina Strawberry Association

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April 22, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The North Carolina Strawberry Association supports the Agriculture Reimbursement of Expenses for Legal Immigrant Employees in Farming legislation which has been introduced in both the North Carolina House and Senate (the AgRELIEF Act, or H1364 and S881).

Strawberry growers require a reliable workforce, especially during harvest season, for their crop. Because of the shortage of U.S. agricultural workers, many of our growers employ workers through the H2A program. This allows growers to make sure that these workers are legally in the country and provides many safeguards as well for the wellbeing of these workers. It is an expensive program for growers.

This legislation provides, at no expense to the state, some financial relief to those farmers who have already made the choice to use legal immigrant workers, and should provide incentive and support to encourage other growers to take this same path.

Sincerely,

*Deborah S. Wechsler*

Executive Secretary, NC Strawberry Association