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To Whom It May Concern:

NC produces 21 major fruit and vegetable crops and countless specialty crops throughout the state.

North Carolina offers quality, proximity, and consistent supply. Our fertile soils and climate are conducive to premium quality. We are located within 24 hours of 65% of the United States population. Buyers may traverse North Carolina production areas from the eastern coastal plain westward to the mountains for a consistent six month supply of many vegetable commodities.

The North Carolina fruit and vegetable industries have many suppliers who can meet various needs. In order to meet these needs NC growers must have a reliable workforce.

The North Carolina Vegetable Growers Association (NCVGA) expresses their support for the Agriculture Reimbursement of Expenses for Legal Immigrant Employees in Farming legislation introduced in both the North Carolina House and Senate, also referred to as the AgRELIEF Act (H1364 and S881).

Even in the economic downturn, vegetable growers are finding it difficult to find the workers they need to maintain their farming operations. Because of the shortage of U.S. agricultural workers, many of our growers employ workers through the H2A program.

If H1364 and S881 were to pass this would level the playing field and may encourage more farmers to use the legal H2A program.

NCVGA is supportive of this cost-share program and commends State government for this pro-active step to encourage and assist farmers with hiring legal farm workers.

Sincerely,

Kendall Hill
President