



March 17, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the 3,069 county governments we represent, we are writing in support of the bipartisan Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021 (H.R. 1603). This bill would help address our nation's labor crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic by preserving, expanding and improving on the processes and resources aimed at helping counties bolster our local agricultural economies.

Our nation's food system has been severely impacted, from production to consumption, by the ongoing public health crisis and subsequent economic downturn. County governments across the country also face many challenges to provide non-congregate, quality affordable housing options for rural families and farm laborers. Unfortunately, federal regulations oftentimes are inflexible and too restrictive to address the unique needs of our rural communities. Much of our nation's existing farm labor housing has also aged past its useful life with severe physical deficiencies, including inadequate heating, plumbing and space.

Additionally, we are encouraged by efforts in this bill to modernize and simplify the H-2A visa process and ensure that a reliable and capable workforce is available for the nation's farmers and ranchers. This bill would provide stability and consistency in our farm labor force and create a realistic path for migrant and seasonal farm workers to contribute to our recovering national economy.

We ask that you join us in supporting the swift passage of the Farm Work Modernization Act and help strengthen our nation's local agricultural economies in a bipartisan way. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties