March 26, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, Committee on Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Chairman Goodlatte:

We represent a substantial amount of our nation’s agricultural community. As you know, our nation’s farmers and ranchers are the backbone of our economy and are responsible for feeding billions of people, both in our country and around the world. This is a great responsibility and requires the use of both our natural resources and our human resources. Agriculture is a labor intensive industry and even in tough economic times there remains a shortage of domestic labor.

We understand the House Committee on the Judiciary has begun consideration of immigration enforcement legislation. While we agree with the need to stem the flow of illegal immigration and are supportive of measures like E-Verify, implementing mandatory E-Verify without also enacting strong reforms ensuring our farmers have access to a legal, reliable and stable workforce will cause serious problems for our domestic agricultural industry and our nation’s economy. The H-2A program is unworkable and as a result supplies only 10% of agricultural workers – while dairy is not allowed to participate at all – and the current program simply does not have the capacity to increase by ten-fold. In short, agriculture needs a solution that addresses the unique aspects of its workforce and ensures a legal, reliable workforce in both the short and long term.

Our farmers and ranchers must have access to a legal and reliable workforce in order to provide the world with a safe and abundant supply of food. It is imperative that any effort to implement mandatory E-Verify be coupled with a solution to agriculture’s unique labor needs. Failure to couple these reforms together would create an unworkable situation for American agriculture. We stand ready to work with you to ensure enforcement of our immigration laws while also implementing critically needed reforms for agriculture labor.

We appreciate your attention to this request and we stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,

Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress
Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert
Member of Congress

Mark E. Amodei
Member of Congress

Earl L. ‘Buddy’ Carter
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Chris Collins
Member of Congress

Dan Benishek
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Rick Crawford
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress

Ken Buck
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Larry Bucshon
Member of Congress

Jeff Denham
Member of Congress
Charles W. Dent  
Member of Congress

Scott DesJarlais, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress

Sean P. Duffy  
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Chris Gibson  
Member of Congress

Richard Hanna  
Member of Congress

Andy Harris, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress

David P. Joyce  
Member of Congress

John Katko  
Member of Congress

Mike Kelly  
Member of Congress

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress
Austin Scott  
Member of Congress

Glenn 'GT' Thompson  
Member of Congress

Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress

Ted Yoho  
Member of Congress

David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress

Fred Upton  
Member of Congress

Elise Stefanik  
Member of Congress

Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress

Bruce Westerman  
Member of Congress

Marlin Stutzman  
Member of Congress

Steve Womack  
Member of Congress