December 4, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

The Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform (ACIR) is deeply concerned with pending immigration enforcement legislation known as the 'Secure America Through Verification and Enforcement Act of 2007' or 'SAVE Act' (H.R.4088 and S.2368). While these bills seek to address the worthy goal of stricter immigration law enforcement, they fail to take a comprehensive approach to solving the immigration problem. History shows that a one dimensional approach to the nation's immigration problem is doomed to fail. Enforcement alone, without providing a viable means to obtain a legal workforce to sustain economic growth is a formula for disaster. Agriculture best illustrates this point.

Agricultural industries that need considerable labor in order to function include the fruit and vegetable, dairy and livestock, nursery, greenhouse, and Christmas tree sectors. Localized labor shortages have resulted in actual crop loss in various parts of the country. More broadly, producers are making decisions to scale back production, limit expansion, and leave many critical tasks unfulfilled. Continued labor shortages could force more producers to shift production out of the U.S., thus stressing already taxed food and import safety systems. Farm lenders are becoming increasingly concerned about the stability of affected industries. This problem is aggravated by the nearly universal acknowledgement that the current H-2A agricultural guest worker program does not work.

Based on government statistics and other evidence, roughly 80 percent of the farm labor force in the United States is foreign born, and a significant majority of that labor force is believed to be improperly authorized. The bills' imposition of mandatory electronic employment eligibility verification will screen out the farm labor force without providing access to legal workers. Careful study of farm labor force demographics and trends indicates that there is not a replacement domestic workforce available to fill these jobs. This feature alone will result in chaos unless combined with labor-stabilizing reforms.

Continued failure by Congress to act to address this situation in a comprehensive fashion is placing in jeopardy U.S. food security and global competitiveness. Furthermore, congressional inaction threatens the livelihoods of millions of Americans whose jobs exist because labor-intensive agricultural production is occurring in America. If production is forced to move, most of the upstream and downstream jobs will disappear as well.

The Coalition cannot defend of the broken status quo. We support well-managed borders and a rational legal system. We have worked for years to develop popular bipartisan legislation that would stabilize the existing experienced farm workforce and provide an orderly transition to wider reliance on a legal agricultural worker program that provides a fair balance of employer

and employee rights and protections. We respectfully urge you to oppose S.2368, H.R.4088, or any other bills that would impose employment-based immigration enforcement in isolation from equally important reforms that would provide for a stable and legal farm labor force.

Sincerely,

THE AGRICULTURE COALITION FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM
Agricultural Affiliates
AgriMark Inc
Agri-Placement Services
Allied Federated Co-Ops, Inc.
Allied Grape Growers
Almond Hullers And Processors
American Agri-Women
American Frozen Foods Institute
American Horse Council
American Mushroom Institute
American Nursery & Landscape Association
American Sheep Industry Association
CoBank
Council of Northeast Farmer Cooperatives
Dairy Farmers of America
Dairylea Cooperative, Incorporated
Farwest Equipment Dealers Association
Federation of Employers and Workers of America
Gulf Citrus Growers Association
Irrigation Association
Land O' Lakes
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Christmas Tree Association
National Cotton Ginners Association
National Council of Agricultural Employers
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Potato Council
National Watermelon Association
New England Apple Council
Nisei Farmers League
Northeast Dairy Producers
Northern Christmas Tree Growers
Northeast Farm Credit
Northwest Farm Credit Services
Northwest Horticultural Council
OFA – An Association of Floriculture Professionals
Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association
Pacific Tomato Growers
Perennial Plant Association
Produce Marketing Association

Pro-Fac Cooperative
Raisin Bargaining Association
Senseny South Corporation
Snake River Farmers Association
Society of American Florists
Southeast Cotton Ginners Association, Inc.
Southeast Dairy Farmers Association
Southern Christmas Tree Association
Southern Cotton Ginners Association
Southern Nursery Association
Turfgrass Producers International
United Agribusiness League
United Egg Association
United Egg Producers
United Fresh Produce Association
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Custom Harvesters Association
Western Growers
Western Plant Health Association
Western Range Association
Western United Dairymen
WineAmerica
Wine Grape Growers of America
Wine Institute
Agricultural Affiliates (New York)
Agricultural Council of California
Alabama Nursery & Landscape Association
Alabama Watermelon Association
Arizona Nursery Association
Arkansas Green Industry Association
Blue Diamond Growers
California Apple Commission
California-Arizona Watermelon Association
California Avocado Commission
California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers
California Association of Wine Grape Growers
California Canning Peach Association
California Citrus Mutual
California Dairies Inc.
California Dried Plum Board
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Fig Institute
California Floral Council
California Grain and Feed Association
California Grape And Tree Fruit League
California League of Food Processors
California Pear Growers Association
California Seed Association
California Strawberry Commission
California Strawberry Nurserymens' Association

California Walnut Commission
California Women for Agriculture
Nursery Growers Association (CA)
Olive Grower Council of California
Pacific Egg and Poultry Association
SunMaid Growers of California
SunSweet Growers Inc.
Valley Fig
Ventura County Agricultural Association
Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado
Colorado Nursery & Greenhouse Association
Colorado Potato Administrative Committee
Colorado Sugarbeet Growers Association
Colorado Wine Industry Development Board
Connecticut Nursery & Landscape Association
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Citrus Packers
Florida Fruit And Vegetable Association
Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association
Florida Watermelon Association
Georgia Green Industry Association
Georgia Milk Producers
Georgia Watermelon Association
Winegrowers Association of Georgia
Idaho Apple Commission
Idaho Grower Shippers Association
Idaho Nursery & Landscape Association
Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association
Potato Growers of Idaho
Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association
Illinois Landscape Contractors Association
Illinois Nurserymen's Association
Illinois Specialty Growers Association
Indiana-Illinois Watermelon Association
Indiana Nursery & Landscape Association
Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association
Kansas Nursery and Landscape Association
Kentucky Nursery & Landscape Association
Farm Credit of Maine
Maine Nursery & Landscape Association
Maryland-Delaware Watermelon Association
Maryland Nursery & Landscape Association
Associated Landscape Contractors of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association
Michigan Apple Committee
Michigan Christmas Tree Association
Michigan Green Industry Association
Michigan Horticultural Society
Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association
Michigan Vegetable Council

WineMichigan
Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association
Mississippi Nursery Association
Missouri-Arkansas Watermelon Association
Missouri Landscape & Nursery Association
Montana Nursery & Landscape Association
Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association
New England Nursery Association
New Hampshire Farm Bureau
New Jersey Farm Bureau
New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association
Dairy Producers of New Mexico
Cayuga Marketing
Farm Credit of Western New York
First Pioneer Farm Credit
New York Apple Association
New York Horticulture Society
New York State Nursery & Landscape Association
New York State Vegetable Growers Association
ProFac Cooperative
Yankee Farm Credit
North Carolina Association of Nurserymen
North Carolina Christmas Tree Association
North Carolina Commercial Flower Growers Association
North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
North Carolina Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association
North Carolina Green Industry Association
North Carolina Potato Association
North Carolina Strawberry Association
North Carolina Watermelon Association
North Carolina Wine & Grape Council
Northern California Growers Association
North Dakota Nursery & Greenhouse Association
Northern Ohio Growers Association
Nursery Growers Of Lake County Ohio, Inc.
Ohio Fruit Growers Society
Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association
Ohio Vegetable & Potato Growers Association
Oklahoma Greenhouse Growers Association
Oklahoma State Nursery & Landscape Association
Hood River Grower-Shipper Association
Oregon Association of Nurseries
Oregon Wine Board
Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association
State Horticultural Association Of Pennsylvania
Raisin Bargaining Association
Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association
Snake River Farmers Association
South Carolina Greenhouse Growers Association
South Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association

South Carolina Watermelon Association
South Dakota Nursery & Landscape Association
Tennessee Nursery & Landscape Association
Lonestar Milk Producers
Plains Cotton Growers
Select Milk Producers (TX)
South Texas Cotton and Grain Association
Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council
Texas AgriWomen
Texas Association of Dairymen
Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Texas Citrus Mutual
Texas Cotton Ginners Association
Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Association
Texas Nursery & Landscape Association
Texas-Oklahoma Watermelon Association
Texas Poultry Federation
Texas Produce Export Association
Texas Produce Association
Texas Turf Producers Association
Texas Vegetable Association
Western Peanut Growers
Utah Dairymen's Association
Utah Nursery & Landscape Association
Vermont Apple Marketing Board
Vermont Association of Professional Horticulturists
Frederick County Fruit Growers' Association (Virginia)
Northern Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
Southwest Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association
Virginia Apple Growers Association
Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association
Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association
Wasco County Fruit & Produce League
Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers
Washington Growers Clearing House Association
Washington Growers League
Washington Potato & Onion Association
Washington State Potato Commission
Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association
Washington Wine Institute
West Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association
Wisconsin Christmas Tree Growers Association
Wisconsin Nursery Association
Wisconsin Landscape Federation
Wisconsin Sod Producers Association

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