

May 13, 2020

The Honorable Ash Kalra
Chair, Assembly Committee on Labor and Employment
1020 N Street, Room 155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 2043 (R. Rivas) Agricultural Employee COVID-19 Health and Safety Act - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Kalra,

NextGen California respectfully requests your support of AB 2043 (R. Rivas), the Agricultural Employee COVID-19 Health and Safety Act. AB 2043 will fund a health and safety educational outreach campaign targeted at farmworkers as well as codify certain agricultural worksite health and safety guidance protocols established by Cal-OSHA.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required our state government to enact comprehensive health and safety measures that protect our residents and communities. AB 2043 will help to amplify and disseminate information about the state's commitment to implement health and safety practices that protect vulnerable farmworkers from exposure to the coronavirus. Such a culturally appropriate health and safety campaign is a necessary response to mitigate against the spread of the virus among this vulnerable population.

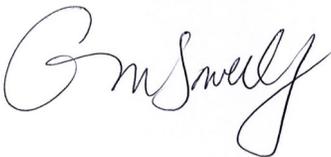
The pandemic has made us all much more aware of what a vitally important job farm workers perform in our economy -- they are essential workers and all essential workers must be safeguarded. Providing information to farmworkers about the steps necessary to protect themselves and prevent the spread of the virus will help ensure that employees do not have to miss work nor run the risk of spreading the disease to an already disproportionately impacted community. Additionally, enacting protections for agricultural workers will help to shed a more accurate light on the vitalness of their work.

Lastly, we look forward to working closely with Assemblymember Rivas to meet the urgent safe water needs of our farmworker communities and other vulnerable California communities -- because as we know, issues related to access to safe water and the needs of our farmworker communities are intricately connected and so both should be addressed together.

NextGen California advocates for policies and programs that treat all Californians equitably, regardless of their immigration or socioeconomic status. Therefore, it is critically important for the state to outreach to the farmworker community and provide them with the health and safety information they need to safeguard against the coronavirus.

For all of the above reasons, we respectfully request your “Aye” vote on AB 2043.

Sincerely,



Arnold Sowell Jr.

Executive Director, NextGen California