

Mr. Mayor and Members of the Merced City Council,

I am Manuel Cunha, Jr., President of the Nisei Farmers League . I would like to submit the following comments into the public record for Merced City Council meeting to be held on August 16, 2021.

We found in the House of Representatives version of the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021 (Immigration Reform Bill), they did not include Packing Houses nor Processing facilities. This would really hurt our agricultural industry as well as cities. That is why this is so important.

I have a sample letter below that may be addressed to our two U. S. Senators, Feinstein and Padilla should you choose to support our request.

Our letter also supports Dreamers. We ask that the City of Merced to recognize that many Dreamers have parents who work in agriculture and bring significant dollars into our cities. We ask that you support legislation for Dreamers concurrently.

Thank you,
Manuel Cunha, Jr., President
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The City of Merced greatly appreciates the United States House of Representatives passage of the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021. We have hope that it will pass the Senate, especially since undocumented farmworkers and other agricultural employees have shown how important they are during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the legislation in its current form leaves out a large segment of our undocumented agricultural workforce, people that work in packing houses and processing plants.

Packing houses and processing plants are a vital economic sector in our community. They provide our residents with good paying jobs. It would be unfair for these workers who are sorting, packing, or processing agriculture commodities to have to resign from these agricultural jobs to seek another that meets the legislation's current definition of *agricultural labor or services*. They too are working long and hours, especially during peak season. Work done whether in the field or in packing houses or processing plants is important to the agricultural industry.

Dreamers must not be forgotten in this push to legalize the agricultural workforce. In our community, many Dreamers have parents who work in agriculture. To not move forward without legislation for Dreamers leaves their future uncertain. A federal district court order enjoined the granting of the initial DACA request. Further court rulings could terminate DACA for those already granted. We will lose teachers, doctors, lawyers, and workers in almost all occupations.

The City of Merced respectfully requests that the definition of *agricultural labor or services* in the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021 be modified to include employees who work in packing houses and processing plants and that legislation for Dreamers be passed concurrently.