



August 14, 2020

Senator Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 2043 (Rivas)--SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Portantino,

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) has represented small and mid-scale family farmers in California for over 40 years, seeking to preserve family-scale agriculture and promote environmental sustainability. We write today in strong support of AB 2043 by Assemblyman Rivas, which will provide agricultural workers with more information about COVID-19.

Many of our members hire workers on their farms, and most of them hire these workers directly. They have been very concerned about COVID-19 impacting their workers and by extension their own families. Cal/OSHA has issued guidance for agricultural employers dealing with COVID-19—*Cal/OSHA Safety and Health Guidance: COVID-19 Infection Prevention for Agricultural Employers and Employees*—but many farmers and most farm workers are not familiar with it. There needs to be much broader dissemination of this guidance, and in languages that workers can understand.

AB 2043 directs Cal/OSHA to disseminate information consistent with the guidance documents and to enforce the health and safety best practices as specified in the guidance documents for agricultural employers and employees. AB 2043 funds a targeted outreach campaign to raise awareness around COVID-19 workplace health and safety guidance, as well as how to access COVID-19-related paid sick leave and workers compensation benefits and how to report problems to Cal/OSHA. Lastly, Cal/OSHA will be required to compile and report statistics on complaints related to agricultural workplaces.

Our members want to do the right thing with respect to the workers and COVID-19. We believe this legislation will help them and their workers understand just what that entails. We also believe that more light needs to be cast on employers who are not making the required effort to protect workers. It is not right that “essential” workers who are providing food for the rest of the country should become sick and die due to employers’ negligence.

For these reasons CAFF strongly supports AB 2043. Please advance this important bill to the Senate floor.

Sincerely,

David Runsten
Policy Director

cc: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate President Pro Tem Toni G. Atkins
Assemblymember Robert Rivas