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Washington, D.C. (March 3, 2015)—“The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) vehemently opposes the Legal Workforce Act currently being considered in the House Judiciary Committee. Any bill mandating E-verify must only come after or in conjunction with legislation to address the labor crisis being faced by America’s farmers, ranchers and growers.

“Imposing mandatory E-verify without fixing our country’s broken immigration system will sound the death knell for thousands of farming operations across the country. As we have repeatedly stated, agriculture faces unprecedented demographic challenges and relies heavily on foreign-born workers. Continued inaction by Congress in light of these realities will mean more fields lying fallow, more farmers losing their livelihoods and fewer of the foods we eat being grown in America.

“The economic impacts of this will spread far beyond the farm gate as Americans working in industry sectors both upstream and downstream of the farm will see their jobs threatened. Studies have shown that each of the 2 million hired farm employees supports 2 to 3 fulltime American jobs in the food processing, transportation, farm equipment, marketing, retail and other sectors. Mandatory E-Verify without workable labor solutions for agriculture puts these American jobs, and the economies of communities across the country, in jeopardy.

“The path forward is clear—Congress should pass a solution for agriculture that addresses both our current agricultural workforce and creates a new guest worker program to meet future needs and only then implement a mandatory E-verify program. AWC remains committed to working with the House Judiciary Committee members and others to develop legislation that addresses agriculture’s labor needs.”

About the Agriculture Workforce Coalition

The Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC) unites over 70 organizations representing the diverse needs of agricultural employers across the country. AWC serves as the unified voice of agriculture in the effort to ensure that America’s farmers, ranchers and growers have access to a stable and secure workforce.

The steering committee of the AWC consists of: American Farm Bureau Federation, AmericanHort, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, National Council of Agricultural Employers, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union, National Milk Producers Federation, USA Farmers, U.S. Apple Association, United Fresh Produce Association, Western Growers Association, and Western United Dairymen.

To learn more about AWC, visit our website at www.agworkforcecoalition.org.

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