



March 21, 2017

Mr. Christopher Cronen
Field Office Director
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Boston Field Office
1000 District Avenue
Burlington, MA 01803

Mr. Jefferey Curtis
Supervisory Detention and Deportation Officer
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
64 Gricebrook Rd
Saint Albans, VT 05478-9500

Dear Director Cronen and SDDO Curtis:

We write today regarding ICE detention policies toward undocumented agricultural workers in Vermont. It is our understanding that in the past, ICE enforcement has focused on undocumented criminals, and in particular, those who pose a threat to public safety or national security. However, as you know, President Trump's Executive Order on *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States* significantly expands the categories of undocumented workers that ICE may target for detention.

We are very concerned about the impact of that executive order here in Vermont. It has understandably caused widespread fear and anxiety among immigrant farmworkers. Many of these workers have been here for years, and other than their immigration status, most have had no run-ins whatsoever with law enforcement.

The executive order also threatens the stability of our state's agricultural economy. There is a well-documented agricultural labor shortage in Vermont, and migrant farmworkers therefore comprise a significant portion of Vermont's on-farm workforce. Unfortunately, the federal H-2A visa program only allows for the hiring of seasonal or temporary laborers. In the absence of comprehensive immigration reforms that address these realities, farms that require dependable year-round labor – like Vermont's dairy farms – have come to rely on this workforce.

This is no small matter. The Vermont dairy industry generates more than \$2.2 billion per year in economic activity in our state, providing 65% of all agricultural receipts. Vermont also produces more than 60% of the milk consumed in New England. Yet, dairy farmers are struggling with

exceedingly tight margins, as low milk prices often do not even cover the actual costs of production. And now, these struggling farmers must worry about staying afloat with the prospect of losing their workforce without warning.

Moreover, farmers, farmworker advocates and law enforcement alike say the increased threat of deportation has undocumented workers second-guessing whether to cooperate with local law enforcement and the courts on important issues of public safety. Moreover, some farmers say the heightened fear of deportation may cause workers to leave the state, amplifying the already dire agricultural workforce shortage.

This is an urgent issue in our small state – when Vermont farms struggle, so too does Vermont’s entire economy. That is why we respectfully request to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss ICE’s enforcement policies and priorities in our state.

Sincerely,



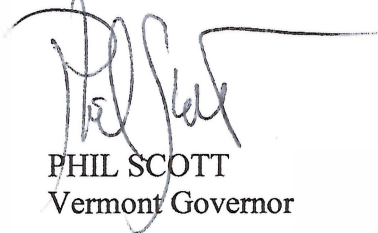
PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



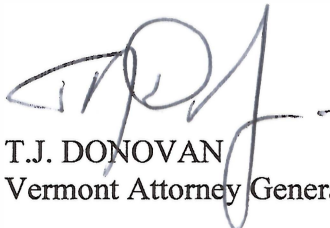
BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PETER WELCH
United States Representative



PHIL SCOTT
Vermont Governor



T.J. DONOVAN
Vermont Attorney General



JOE TISBERT
President, Vermont Farm Bureau

cc: The Honorable John Kelly, Secretary of Homeland Security
The Honorable Thomas Homan, Acting Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement