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September 23, 2011

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**STATEMENT OF FARMWORKER JUSTICE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
AGRICULTURAL LABOR MARKET REFORM ACT OF 2011**
Bill would stabilize farm labor force, provide protections for farmworkers

(WASHINGTON DC) Farmworker Justice welcomes the introduction of the Agricultural Labor Market Reform Act of 2011 and supports its enactment. We thank Representative Berman for his leadership in support of reasonable, workable and fair immigration reform.

The Agricultural Labor Market Reform Act of 2011 would offer a meaningful solution to the needs of agricultural employers, farmworkers and the nation. The bill would establish an earned legalization program under which current undocumented farmworkers in the U.S. who meet stringent requirements are given temporary permission to work in agriculture for three to five years and the opportunity to earn immigration status. Immediate family members in the U.S. also would be eligible to apply for immigration status. "Since more than one-half the seasonal agricultural workers in the U.S. lack authorized immigration status, and the supply of farm labor is threatened by increased immigration enforcement, Congress must reform our broken immigration system. This bill would help ensure a stable, legal workforce in agriculture, which is good for farmworkers, employers, consumers and the national interest," said Bruce Goldstein, President of Farmworker Justice.

The bill would keep the H-2A guestworker program largely intact with some modest reforms to ensure that U.S. workers continue to have preference over foreign guestworkers for jobs in American agriculture and do not experience unfair competition in wages. An earned legalization program for experienced undocumented farmworkers already present in the U.S. would avoid the need for substantial use of the H-2A program, which requires employers to demonstrate a labor shortage. "Farmworker Justice views the H-2A components of this bill as a positive first step toward addressing the systemic abuses in the H-2A program, but believes additional reform is necessary," said Bruce Goldstein.

Farmworker Justice strongly opposes legislation introduced by Rep. Lamar Smith and Rep. Dan Lungren to create massive new guestworker programs that strip essential worker protections, slash farmworker wages, and would do nothing to address the reality of roughly 1 million undocumented farmworkers already here in the U.S. producing our food.

Rather than waste time discussing failed proposals of the past, Congress should embrace Rep. Berman's Agricultural Labor Market Reform Act of 2011.

Farmworker Justice is a national advocacy organization for migrant and seasonal farmworkers with thirty years of experience on immigration and labor policy.

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