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**Farmworker Justice Statement in Support of Senate Bill on  
COVID-19 & Farmworkers:  
Sen. Merkley's Frontline At-Risk Manual (FARM) Laborers Protection Act**

"Farmworker Justice strongly supports Sen. Jeff Merkley's introduction of the Frontline At-Risk Manual (FARM) Laborers Protection Act to help protect farmworkers and their family members from COVID-19. As essential workers in the food sector, farmworkers are expected to go to work every day during the pandemic, but their low wages and difficult working conditions and inadequate action by many of their employers place them at great risk of illness and death. As harvest seasons have begun to ramp up, outbreaks of COVID-19 in farmworker communities have occurred and are likely to increase. The bill should be passed to help ensure the safety, health and economic security of farmworkers and their family members as well as avoid potential disruptions of our nation's food supply," said Bruce Goldstein, President of Farmworker Justice.

As Sen. Merkley's summary states: "This bill requires agricultural producers (regardless of the number of employees) who receive future direct agriculture-specific COVID-19 to do the following:

- Provide sick pay for 10 paid days of sick leave.
- Provide pandemic premium pay at an additional \$13 per hour for agriculture workers, acknowledging the personal risk of maintaining the nation's food supply during the pandemic.
- Make efforts to maintain payrolls and limit agriculture worker layoffs and furloughs.

- Implement CDC recommendations on sanitation and social distancing in work sites, employer-provided housing, and transportation.
- The bill also provides grants to agricultural producers to support in providing premium pay and purchasing of handwashing stations, portable restrooms and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Farmworker Justice is a national advocacy organization for farmworkers. FJ founded in 1981 is based in Washington, D.C. and collaborates with organizations throughout the country to empower farmworkers to improve their wages, working conditions, occupational safety, health immigration status and access to justice.

Farmworker Justice has been monitoring outbreaks of COVID-19 in farmworker communities. It has also been advocating for occupational safety standards to reduce the risk of illness and death among farmworkers and for economic support during the pandemic for farmworker families. Information about COVID-19 and farmworkers is on our website's COVID-19 page. <https://www.farmworkerjustice.org/covid-19>

[www.farmworkerjustice.org](http://www.farmworkerjustice.org)