

STATE CAPITOL
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California State Senate

SENATOR
JOHN LAIRD

SEVENTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



February 12, 2021

Governor Gavin Newsom
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via email

Dear Governor Newsom:

We write to you on an issue of utmost urgency related to COVID-19 vaccinations within our community. Nearly 35,000 seasonal farmworkers will be traveling to Monterey County in a matter of weeks to begin work on the spring harvest and it is not clear the state is properly planning for their arrival, care, or vaccination. These farmworkers will be traveling mostly from Yuma, Arizona – a known COVID-19 hotspot. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors and Monterey County’s health director have all written your office and the California Department of Public Health on this issue, however they have not gotten a response.

What is unclear is how the state is working to address the vaccinations needed to protect this vulnerable and valuable workforce. The data is clear; Latinos in our state are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 infections, bearing the brunt of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. Farmworkers up and down the state, including those within our community, are working selflessly through this pandemic to put food on our tables and support their families. They put their lives on the line everyday they go to work, rain or shine, clear or smoke-filled skies, so we can eat. We owe this key part of our workforce and community a workable plan to ensure their health and safety.

Since this is a seasonal workforce, they are not included in the County’s overall population. This unfairly and unjustly skews vaccine allocations. With cramped housing conditions and communal transportation as the only option for travel, this is a recipe for a health and economic disaster. There needs to be a comprehensive plan to ensure their arrival, which our economy benefits from, is considered when allocating vaccines to our already sparse allocations.

We have attached the correspondence from the County to provide additional background on this issue. In addition, we are happy to convene meetings with all involved to ensure this pressing matter is addressed quickly.

Please contact Richard Stapler on Sen. Laird's staff at 916 549 9630 to schedule meetings or get additional information.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Laird". The letters are cursive and fluid.

State Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna M. Caballero". The signature is written in a cursive style.

State Senator Anna Caballero (D-Salinas)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Rivas". The signature is written in a cursive style.

State Assembly Member Robert Rivas (D-Hollister)