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December 6, 2024

The Honorable Lori Chávez-DeRemer
Nominee for United States Secretary of Labor
1722 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Nominee for United States Secretary of Agriculture
P.O. Box 2123
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Nominees Chávez-DeRemer and Rollins:

Congratulations on being nominated by President Donald Trump to lead the United States Department of Labor (DOL) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As you begin your new role, one of the issues we hope you will consider addressing is the continuously rising Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) for H-2A guest farm workers.

Our office is aware that DOL uses the Farm Labor Survey (FLS) data provided in the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service's Farm Labor report to establish H-2A workers' minimum wage. Regrettably we understand that because of this report, farmers in the State of Georgia will face an estimated 9.5% increase in wages they are required to pay if they use H-2A labor.¹ This follows substantial prior increases handed down by DOL during the Biden Administration. These steep increases are crushing Georgia farmers who are already battling sharp declines in net farm income due to the historic damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

Last year, our office sent a letter to Labor Secretary Julie Su and Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack requesting that these increases not take effect, but the administration refused.² It is our desire to partner with you to strengthen the agriculture industry for the benefit of all farmers and consumers. Unfortunately, the actions of the Biden Administration have only served to harm

¹ Samantha Ayoub, "2025 AEWR – Labor Costs Continue to Climb," American Farm Bureau Federation, 2024, <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/2025-aewr-labor-costs-continue-to-climb>

² <https://law.georgia.gov/document/document/122923-ag-letter-dol>

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family farms in Georgia and the entire agriculture industry as evidenced by a record agricultural trade deficit announced this week by the USDA.³

Georgia agriculture is one of our state's largest economic drivers contributing approximately \$83.6 billion annually. Georgia remains the number one state in the nation for the production of peanuts, broilers, pecans, blueberries and spring onions. We are also one of the top producers of cotton, watermelon, peaches, eggs, cucumbers, sweet corn, bell peppers, tomatoes, cantaloupes, rye and cabbage.⁴ This type of crop production takes tens of thousands of hardworking Georgia farms to sustain.

Our office's request is to work with you and the Trump Administration to address the rising AEWB before Georgia farming simply becomes unaffordable. We believe the health of our farms is directly tied to the food security, national security, and economic security interests of the United States. Thank you for your consideration and please reach out to us if you have any questions, and we look forward to working with you and the rest of the new administration in the days ahead.

Sincerely,



Chris Carr, Georgia Attorney General

³ Greg Johnson, "USDA projects record ag trade deficit to expand in 2025," Blue Book Services, 2024, <https://www.producebluebook.com/2024/12/05/usda-projects-record-ag-trade-deficit-to-expand-in-2025/#>

⁴ "About Georgia Ag," Georgia Farm Bureau, <https://www.gfb.org/learn/abt-ga-ag>