



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Media Contact:**

Sandra Rodarte

509.424.2157

[info@latinocivicalliance.org](mailto:info@latinocivicalliance.org)



**Organizations & Tribes join LCA to Protect Ag Workers**

**Washington state-wide organizations and Tribes unite to request Governor Inslee and the State Legislature act swiftly to protect Ag workers**

Olympia WA. 5.7.2020. Washington state-wide organizations, faith-based groups, and Tribes join forces with Latino Civic Alliance (LCA) to request that the Governor and State Legislature do more to protect Ag Workers. The State must have a strong enforcement program to deal with those who do not comply with workplace standards.

The COVID 19 pandemic is spreading fast in the Agriculture industry with workers becoming sick or dying and the food supply is in danger. In Washington State the estimate is 90% of the Ag Workforce is Latino, and data shows that COVID-19 is spreading at an alarming rate in the workforce. The alliance is asking for preventative and intervention protocols to support Ag workers and strong enforcement regulations to deal with those who do not comply with standards.

The food industry has a responsibility to produce safe food in a safe workplace, and the Government is responsible for setting safety standards, conducting inspections, and ensuring that standards are met. Food and Ag workers have been deemed essential workers, critical to the USA infrastructure, but systematically they have been excluded from any type of benefits. Washington State has one of the largest agriculture economies in the United States and Ag workers contribute to the local economy's success, yet these workers live below poverty levels, lack health care benefits, sick leave, and decent wages. In fact, Ag Workers have an average life expectancy of 49 years due to the harsh working conditions. These are diverse jobs, in the field, warehouses, working in Seafood, Dairy, Poultry, Tree & Fruit, and Meat Processing, and the risk is to the whole food supply.

“The Puyallup Tribe stands with our friends at the Latino Civic Alliance in calling upon the governor, the Legislature and state agencies to make agricultural worker health and safety a priority. As the original workers of these sacred lands and seas, our people worked in the fields and on the waters for generations to provide food for our families and our communities. We understand the important role agricultural workers play in our economies and our everyday wellbeing, and that is why we are pleased to lend our support to the LCA in ensuring Ag workers are adequately protected.

-Tim Reynon, JD, BSW and member of the Puyallup Tribal Council

"Judaism commands us to protect, support, and sustain life at all costs. We must actively pursue dignity and justice for all people – regardless of their identity or background. The Jewish Federation will work to ensure that the safety of farmworkers and their families is a top priority in our state, and that farmworkers are afforded the same basic rights and supports that all other essential workers here have – during this global pandemic and beyond." — Nancy B. Greer, President and CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle

"As followers of Christ we have an obligation to stand with farm workers and their families, during this crisis, and in the coming months when we start on the road to recovery. Today we ask how are the children, do they have a roof over their head, food on the table, health care, running water, and access to education? The Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ is asking people of faith to stand with Latino Civic Alliance to bring protections for farm workers, and security to their families." Rev. Mike Denton, Conference Minister

"Ag workers are the "first responders" because they are risking their lives on the front lines of the COVID-19 battle. We are asking Washingtonians to get involved, and not stand on the sidelines. We are grateful that other organizations understand that during this time unity is needed. Our food supply is being affected and any answer should not be at the cost of Ag workers. We need immediate policy solutions to protect Ag workers and ensure the success of the Ag industry. " – Nina Martinez, LCA Board Chair

#####

**About Latino Civic Alliance (LCA)** Latino Civic Alliance formed in 2005 is a statewide 501c.3 organization that promotes Latino/as to participate in civic engagement and advocacy in their communities. LCA advocates improved policies in education, immigration, healthcare, small business, public safety and labor. Firmly rooted in the belief that Latino/as and Washingtonians should have direct access to local public officials, state legislators, local and state government. [www.latinocivicalliance.com](http://www.latinocivicalliance.com)