



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Board of Supervisors

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**Alfredo Pedroza**  
Chairman

February 8, 2017

The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 94249-0004

**RE: SUPPORT for Assembly Bill 317 (Aguiar-Curry) – Farmworker Housing**

Dear Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry:

The Napa County Board of Supervisors unanimously supports your measure, Assembly Bill 317 (AB 317), that would establish a State funding stream for the financing, maintenance and operation of Napa County's three farmworker housing centers.

The Board greatly appreciates your leadership on this issue. It is a top priority item in Napa County's 2017 Legislative & Policy Platform.

AB 317 would establish the Napa County Farmworker Centers Account to be administered by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to assist in the financing, maintenance, and operation of the Napa's three farmworker housing centers. The bill would require HCD to annually award up to \$250,000 in matching funds to the Napa County Housing Authority (NCHA) upon demonstration that the NCHA is capable of continuing to effectively serve the housing needs of migrant or other farmworkers in Napa County and to provide equal or greater funds from local sources.

Napa's farmworker housing program is unique and deserving of funding. The program is a partnership with the County, farmworkers, industry stakeholders, and the local community. We believe the program, which serves mostly single, male migrant workers, is the only such farmworker housing program that exists through sustained support from the business community.

Our farmworker housing centers are highly efficient, providing three meals and a bed night for a total expense of \$23 per day. The increased occupancy provides additional income from rent, yet it is still not enough to cover the expenses. Keeping the centers alive will require a dramatic reduction in the operating schedule if another funding source is not located. The NCHA relies on a combination of revenue sources to maintain the centers. One of the major revenue sources is the assessment that is levied by growers upon themselves. Per State law, this assessment is capped at \$10 per planted acre. This week, Napa's State Senator Bill Dodd filed SB 240 that seeks to increase that cap to \$15. The bill is supported by agricultural stakeholders and the local community. During the last fiscal

**Brad Wagenknecht**  
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**Belia Ramos**  
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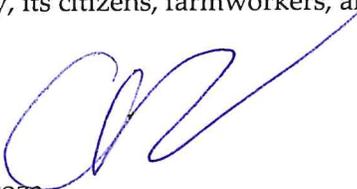
year, the NCHA relied heavily on County CSA 4 reserves. This action is unsustainable, as the revenue is not keeping pace with inflationary pressure on operating costs.

The State already has an investment in each of Napa County's three farmworker housing centers. They were all built or rehabilitated with the assistance of the Joe Serna Jr. grant funding program. Unfortunately, the Joe Serna program was limited in previous years to only funding capital improvements at the centers and not ongoing operations.

The Napa farmworker centers provide a critical need for not just the Napa agricultural community but the agricultural community in neighboring counties. The centers have been running at full capacity for 10-11 months per year due to the high level of maintenance grape vines in the Napa Valley and other wine grape growing regions require and the general lack of affordable and safe farmworker housing anywhere near the County. Due to the requirements of the Joe Serna Jr. funding, the County's centers are open to any farmworker whether they work in Napa or not. Many of the farmworkers who are residents of our centers work for farm labor contractors. These farm labor contractors largely draw their workforce from other parts of California. Farm labor contractors will often have contracts in multiple counties. Therefore, the workers may also work on farms in other parts of Northern California. The vineyard owners, local businesses and County are effectively subsidizing residency for a regional workforce.

For these reasons, the Board unanimously endorses AB 317 and looks forward to its passage into law. The Board again wishes to thank you again for your leadership on this issue that is critical to Napa County, its citizens, farmworkers, and economy.

Sincerely,



Alfredo Pedroza  
Chairman, Napa County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Bill Dodd  
Members, Napa County Board of Supervisors  
Leanne Link, Napa County Executive Officer  
Paul Yoder/Karen Lange, Shaw/Yoder/Antwih  
Rural County Representatives of California  
California State Association of Counties