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April 2, 2025

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 628 (Grove), Agricultural worker overtime tax credit - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for SB 628 (Grove), which would provide much-needed relief to our agricultural employers by allowing them to claim a tax credit for overtime wages paid to agricultural employees as prescribed by the 2016 Overtime for Agricultural Workers Act (AB 1066).

As one of California's most significant agricultural regions, Kern County is home to thousands of farms and agribusinesses that are critical to our local economy and food supply. The agricultural industry operates under unique labor demands, requiring a workforce that often exceeds traditional hourly thresholds. By offering a tax credit to employers covering overtime costs, this bill helps sustain our local agricultural businesses while ensuring that workers continue to receive fair compensation for their labor.

The passage of this bill will alleviate financial burdens on our farmers and ranchers, allowing them to remain competitive in an increasingly challenging economic landscape. It will also help maintain job stability for agricultural workers, who are essential to our region's economy and food production system. A 2023 study by UC Berkeley found that California agricultural workers have been earning less since AB 1066 became law and noted that early evidence indicates the law is not benefiting the workers it aims to protect.

SB 628 is a commonsense solution that ensures agricultural workers have more opportunities to earn, while providing relief to our agricultural businesses who sustain the nation's food supply. We commend Senator Grove for recognizing the need to support California's agricultural sector and encourage swift passage of this important bill. Thank you for your leadership on this matter and for considering the economic well-being of our farming communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Leticia Perez", written over a white background.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange