

Joint Testimony on 2020 MSFW Enumeration Profiles Study

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Chairman VanWoerkom & Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development, thank you for allowing us to provide this joint testimony on the 2020 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study. I'm Lee Gonzales, Deputy Director, Department of Civil Rights.

As Dr. Averill mentioned, our team this morning represents four of the five partner agencies undertaking this work project.

In 2019, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission directed the Department of Civil Rights to work on a new Enumeration Study with other departments providing services to farmworkers. This spurred some high-level meetings with MDARD, DHHS, MDE and LEO to support an updated enumeration profiles study to obtain detailed information about Michigan's farmworker population. This information has not been compiled for Michigan's farmworker population since 2013. Additionally, we are working cooperatively with the Interagency Migrant Services Committee and its Data Task Force.

This multi-agency effort includes financial support as follows: MDARD (\$60,000), DHHS (\$50,000), MDE (\$35,000), LEO (\$40,000) and MDCR (\$75,000). MDCR is responsible for accounting and payment processing involving the vendor, in conjunction with our partner agencies.

Our core team has been working with DTMB Central Procurement on the Request for Proposal in order to select a vendor. All partner agencies will participate with interviewing the bidder proposals. The solicitation goes out this week, and the anticipated contract begin date will be in April. The RFP is for the provision of a report and supporting research data that provides detailed information about Michigan's agricultural worker population, including county level data about the number of migrant, seasonal, year-round, and H-2A agricultural workers and their family members.

As you know, the food and agriculture industry contributes \$104.7 billion to Michigan's economy annually, with \$2.2 billion in exports. Our state's agriculture industry depends on a mostly-immigrant workforce for steady, constant production and processing. The 2013 Enumeration Study found there were 49,135 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Michigan.

The Interagency Migrant Services Committee is the lead agency for the coordination of services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. IMSC is comprised

of government agencies, Michigan State University, AND private sector participation. This public-private partnership includes Michigan Farm Bureau and Telamon Michigan. That's important because in recent years, Michigan has faced a shortage of farmworkers.

Great Lakes Agricultural Labor Services, LLC, an affiliate of the Michigan Farm Bureau and Telamon Michigan both support employers in meeting their agricultural workforce needs through the H-2A foreign worker program. There is a growing trend toward higher dependence on H-2A workers to achieve yearly a sufficient workforce, including the use of 9,000 H-2A temporary workers in 2019.

All of this points to the need for the 2020 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study. Our partner agencies took careful aim that this initiative focuses on a data-driven approach to plan, develop, implement and assist with evaluating state programs for services to our farmworkers. This will benefit Michigan so we can attract more people to work in agriculture and support employers in our vital agricultural sector.

Chairman VanWoerkom -- Thank you again for today's opportunity.