



September 3, 2020

To the members of the House Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to thank you, on behalf of VPIRG's 50,000+ members and supporters, for including the \$5 million necessary to make up for the exclusion of so many immigrants from the CARES Act stimulus relief this spring.

Even though migrant farmworkers in this group are clearly essential workers, they were left out of stimulus payments because of their immigration status. That the White House and Congress chose to prevent millions of immigrants, and their families, from accessing this critical assistance in the midst of the worst public health and economic crisis in a century is abhorrent.

As you well know, the massive economic and health impacts of COVID-19 affect *all* Vermonters. Moreover, immigrant farmworkers statewide are among the most vulnerable to the destructive forces of the coronavirus. For these and other reasons, we are grateful that you plan to provide much-needed relief for workers and families that we have relied on to keep our food system in Vermont running amidst a global pandemic.

Migrant Justice and the Joint Fiscal Office agree that \$5 million would be the minimum necessary to ensure adequate payments make it to every person who was left out of the initial round of relief. That is why we at VPIRG join those who are urging Governor Scott and the Vermont Senate to follow your lead in making sure that these individuals and families receive the same assistance other Vermonters already have.

Thank you for your efforts to do right by these essential Vermonters who for so long have been vital to our food and economic systems.

Ben Edgerly Walsh

VPIRG