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Calls to Respect Farmworkers during this Period of Anti-Immigrant Sentiments

Joint statement by New York Farm Bureau and the Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force focuses on economic impact on farmers and preserving the dignity of hardworking farmworkers

ALBANY, NY (6/1/2017) – Today, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Chair of the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force and Jeff Williams, Director of Public Policy for New York Farm Bureau, issued the following joint statement on immigration issues affecting farms and farmworkers throughout New York.

“Over \$44 billion of New York State’s annual Gross State Product (GSP) of over \$1.5 trillion is economic activity created by the hard work of farmers and farmworkers. The income produced from agriculture production supports over 206,000 jobs, both on the farm and off, and countless small businesses, which are part of the supply chain that assists our farmers in rural communities across New York.

More than 46,000 farm laborers, many of them migrant farmworkers, spend long days and months working to create this vital economic activity for our state, to put food on our tables and to support their families. They are also vital members of their communities; spending their wages in local businesses, housing and paying a variety of state and local taxes.

Farmers and farmworkers remain the hardest working segment of our economy due to the labor- intensive nature of agriculture production. No other Americans and laborers in any other sector of our economy are confronted daily with the strenuous demands of this industry. Yet the anti-immigrant sentiments so pronounced today are tormenting the labor that is so vital to our rural communities and our state.

Migrant farmworkers and their families are in constant fear of being profiled, forced from their jobs, detained and pulled apart, all the while not being recognized for their hard work and contributions to the communities where they reside.

New Yorkers are a better group of people than what the magnified intolerance of our current politics has projected. This state has long supported immigrant communities. It is the basis of our heritage as a melting pot of diverse people working together to build a better state and country. Our political leadership and business leaders should forcefully and unequivocally call for immigration reform and denounce the rhetoric that belittles and dehumanizes farmworkers and simultaneously vilifies the farmers who hire them. In addition, we call on state leaders to support the anti-racial profiling bill (A4879).

Both the Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force and the New York Farm Bureau stand together on this important issue and ask that the goodwill of the majority of our citizenry not be allowed to be sabotaged by hate, intolerance and bigotry.”

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The Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force is a 30-year-old legislative body composed of 41 members of the State Legislature whose districts represent large numbers of Hispanic constituents and who work to advance policies to improve the lives of New York's largest minority group.

New York Farm Bureau is the State's largest agricultural lobbying/trade organization. Its members and the public know the organization as "The Voice of New York Agriculture." New York Farm Bureau is dedicated to solving the economic and public policy issues challenging the agricultural community.