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September 3, 2020

The Honorable Pete Gaynor  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Administrator Gaynor,

I write today to urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to expand the FEMA non-congregate sheltering criteria for COVID-19 to support our agricultural workers, who are on the frontlines of working during a global pandemic. An expansion will offer housing to some of our most vulnerable communities, including the many Latino agricultural workers in my district and across the state of California who are asymptomatic, who are at-risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Agricultural workers are a critical part of California's Central Valley, maintaining the nation's food supply and continuing to work throughout the pandemic as essential workers.

Unfortunately, many of these workers have a difficult time self-isolating. California's Housing for the Harvest program needs the flexibility to provide housing for our agricultural workers. FEMA should expand the non-congregate sheltering criteria to those who are asymptomatic, even outside of the "high-risk" category, effectively allowing our agricultural workers to keep themselves and their families safe during the pandemic.

It is especially important to broaden this criteria given the dire impacts of COVID-19 on Latino communities. According to [Stanislaus County's Dashboard](#), sixty-one percent of the county's COVID-19 positive cases come from Latino patients, while they account for only forty-seven percent of the county's overall population. These numbers reveal that support is needed for this population, and a key way to work towards this goal is to provide them with temporary housing to self-isolate even when they are asymptomatic.

It is my hope that the inclusion of asymptomatic workers in the non-congregate sheltering criteria will allow additional members of our community to stay healthy during the pandemic. I look forward to working with you and FEMA to ensure that our agricultural workers have access to safe temporary housing if they are exposed to COVID-19 while bravely doing their jobs and supporting our nation's food supply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Harder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a solid horizontal line.

Josh Harder

United States Representative (CA-10)