

Meeting Recap: May 12, 2022 SMC Democratic Central Committee, Farmworker Affairs Committee

We debriefed on the Farmworker Roundtable held via Zoom on Saturday, May 7 with electeds, representatives, community leaders and farmworkers and a farmworkers daughter.

The issues at hand included: Access to **clean water, humane farm worker housing and healthcare**. This was the first time ever having a Roundtable of this magnitude with our representatives who understand how important it is for all of us to work together and take collective action to improve the lives, and the future of our farmworkers, the essential workers who put food on the table for all of us, every day.

The goal of the roundtable was to discuss the issues first with elected officials and to identify positive outcomes. Then we will plan the summit to be held in July to discuss and execute specific next steps.

Elected Officials and Representatives:

- Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
- Congresswoman Jackie Speier
- Senator Josh Becker
- Assemblymember Kevin Mullin - District Director Mario Rendon
- Assemblymember Marc Berman
- Supervisor Don Horsley
- County Manager Mike Callagy

Community leaders / Organizations:

- Ayudando Latinos A Soñar (ALAS)
- Puente de la Costa Sur
- Coastside Hope

Action Items:

Water

- County Manager Mike Callagy -- Will look into what is slowing down the process to connect Pescadero High School with safe water? He said the water board will fund it but they haven't said when. Senator Josh Becker said he would help to push it through. (Committee to find out about which specific agency is handling the funding and how it can be expedited.)
- Saul Miranda of Senator Josh Becker's office checked with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's office on the infrastructure bill to apply for a grant for water. He spoke with Nicolas Hargis who offered to compile a list of grant money apps for water.

Housing

- Bay City Flowers – BOS Horsley is looking for funds to purchase, federal money? And is the site okay to build on?
- How to amend the local coastal program without a ballot measure. (Assemblymember Marc Berman)

- Explore some space to lease on the coast and bring in mobile homes for people to live in. There is some immediate benefit that we can create by bringing in mini units or mobile homes and installing them on or near the farms. But explore a lease program (Congresswoman Jackie Speier)

Healthcare

- Issues on the healthcare sliding scale needs adjusting eligibility requirements. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo said Medicaid eligibility coverage should be available for undocumented residents. If it isn't we need to discover where the system is breaking down.
- [Access and Care for Everyone](#) (ACE) – it's a locally funded health care program for low-income adults who do not qualify for other health insurance. Judith Guerrero of Coastside Hope said that ACE needs to be revised based on cost of living. Only emergency ACE funds are available for undocumented residents. Congresswoman Speier also suggested adjusting the qualifications and caps for ACE eligibility.
- Assemblymember Marc Berman cited an April 2022 Public Policy Institute of CA brief on Healthcare Access for CA Farmworkers and said he would review it. (We should too.)

Update on Bonus Pay for low income essential workers, including farmworkers using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds:

- At the November 2021 meeting, Victoria Sanchez De Alba reported that as a member of the Peninsula Latina Giving Circle – a philanthropic group based in the Peninsula founded to address the needs of Latinos in the region and committed to bringing about lasting social change — she and some members sent a [letter to the Board of Supervisors](#) to ask for their consideration of bonus pay for our county's farmworkers. SMC received [nearly \\$150 million](#) from President Biden's American Rescue Plan to address critical health and infrastructure needs in our community. One of the allowable uses for these funds is bonus pay for essential workers.

Victoria personally emailed BOS District 3 representative Don Horsley who sent an encouraging response. She followed-up with him via telephone and emails advocating for farmworkers to receive the funds.

- As a result of her advocacy we won \$500,000, **that is half a million dollars of ARPA funds** for low income essential workers on the Coastside, farmworkers and residents of the North Fair Oaks unincorporated area adjacent to Redwood City. The money will go to the CORE agencies: Coastside Hope and Puente on the coast and the North Fair Oaks Community Center in North Fair Oaks for distribution of these funds to the recipients.