

Dear Manager:

As a customer of your supermarket, **I am contacting you to urge your company to work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)** – an internationally recognized, award-winning farmworker organization – **to help end forced labor, poverty wages and other human rights abuses historically faced by farmworkers harvesting tomatoes for the U.S. retail food industry.**



The Florida tomato industry produces virtually all of the fresh, field-grown tomatoes in the U.S. from October through June each year, including the tomatoes for sale in many of your stores. There is a well-documented human rights crisis in Florida's fields, and **conditions facing farmworkers who harvest your company's tomatoes are as urgent as they are appalling.**

Tomato harvesters are still paid by the piece. The average piece rate today is 50 cents for every 32 lbs. of tomatoes they pick, a rate that has remained virtually unchanged since 1980. As a result of that stagnation, **a worker today must pick nearly 2 ½ tons of tomatoes to earn minimum wage** in a typical 10-hour workday.

In addition to grinding poverty, Florida farmworkers have long suffered some of the worst working conditions of any job in the country. Wage theft, verbal and physical abuse, and sexual harassment are common. This climate of poverty and powerlessness gives rise to the most extreme labor rights violation: forced labor.

Federal Civil Rights officials have successfully prosecuted seven slavery operations involving over 1,200 workers in Florida's fields since 1997, prompting one federal prosecutor to call Florida "ground zero for modern-day slavery." In 2010, federal prosecutors indicted two more forced labor rings operating in Florida.

Today, however, a new day in the fields is underway. An historic partnership among farmworkers, tomato growers, and ten leading food corporations – among them McDonald's, Subway, Whole Foods Market and Trader Joe's – is building a new tomato industry that advances the human rights and dignity of farmworkers.

These corporations have committed to the **Fair Food Program**, through which they are demanding more humane labor standards from their Florida tomato suppliers, paying a premium for more fairly produced tomatoes, and buying only from growers who meet these higher standards.

I look forward to your company living up to its reputation as a good neighbor by participating in the Fair Food Program to ensure humane wages and working conditions for the people who harvest your tomatoes. **Your company's leadership is necessary to sustain this new, cooperative effort to end Florida's agricultural human rights crisis once and for all.**

For more information, please contact the Coalition of Immokalee Workers at 239-657-8311 or workers@ciw-online.org.

Thank you,