

Mr. Steve Ells, CEO
Chipotle Mexican Grill
1401 Wynkoop St., Ste. 500
Denver, CO 80202

Open Community Letter to Chipotle on Behalf of the Sustainable Food Movement

Dear Mr. Ells,

As chefs, small and family farmers, food writers, urban gardeners, sustainable food advocates, and food sovereignty groups, we write united in the expression of our deep concern with Chipotle Mexican Grill's current stance towards Florida farmworkers and their innovative Fair Food Program (FFP). We urge your company to enter, without further delay, into an authentic, verifiable partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) by making a binding commitment to the Fair Food Program – the first large-scale program for verifiable, durable social accountability in the domestic produce industry.

The CIW's Fair Food Program is an innovative partnership among retailers, growers, consumers, and farmworkers to end decades of sub-poverty wages and human rights abuses in Florida's fields. Ten major corporations – including Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, and McDonald's – are already working together with Florida tomato growers and the CIW in a mutually beneficial collaboration that has been called a "win, win, win" situation for all parties involved. Mark Bittman described the Fair Food Program in the pages of the New York Times as, "possibly the most successful labor action in 20 years," while a recent editorial in the Washington Post added, "The CIW model is one of the great human rights success stories of our day." Describing its successful implementation after attending a worker-to-worker education session on an Immokalee farm, Barry Estabrook wrote that the Fair Food Program has brought the Florida tomato industry "from being one of the most repressive employers in the country (nine cases involving abject slavery in Florida fields have been prosecuted in the past 15 years) to being on the road to becoming the most progressive groups in the fruit and vegetable industry."

Through the Fair Food Program, retailers *commit* to: a) pay a premium for more fairly produced tomatoes, so that the premium can be passed on to workers in the form of a bonus, and b) buy only from farms that uphold a stringent code of conduct, including a zero-tolerance policy for forced labor and sexual harassment. The FFP employs worker-to-worker, on-the-clock education sessions to train farmworkers on the new protections and relies on enforcement mechanisms such as a 24-hours-a-day confidential complaint hotline and resolution system combined with regular field operations, management systems, and payroll audits by the Fair Food Standards Council (FFSC) – the independent, third-party, monitoring body dedicated exclusively to overseeing compliance with the Fair Food Code of Conduct. As a model, this worker-led, enforcement-focused approach is unique in the field of social responsibility.

Chipotle markets itself as a sustainable business leader by promoting its ethical purchasing practices and trademarked slogan of "Food with Integrity." And indeed, we applaud the genuine efforts your company has taken in the areas of animal welfare, organic produce procurement, and support for small and family farms. You have helped bring about meaningful advances in those sectors through your purchasing power and your public advocacy.

Yet when it comes to farm labor rights, Chipotle has no real record whatsoever to point to, and your company's response to the Fair Food Program – which has presented Chipotle with a golden opportunity to partner with farmworkers as it has with small farmers and so address this historic inconsistency in your approach to social accountability – has left even your strongest supporters shaking their heads. Chipotle's current go-it-alone approach excludes farmworkers, lacks accountability, and makes no long-term commitment to human rights – essential elements for any defensible definition of social responsibility. Without this binding commitment, Chipotle is under no obligation to stop buying tomatoes from growers where workers' rights are violated, the cornerstone of the Program's success.

By not entering into a direct partnership with the CIW, the steps that your company has taken are not only insufficient, but actually work to undermine the steady drumbeat of advances in this industry. We firmly believe that farmworkers must be seen as indispensable partners in this process. In the words of the CIW, "Nothing can be done for farmworkers without farmworkers."

As members of the sustainable food community, we remind you that respecting human rights is a core principle in building a sustainable food system in our country. A commitment to serving "Food with Integrity" cannot be just another marketing slogan that cashes in on a trend. It must be a holistic vision that respects the rights of farmworkers in our country.

Mr. Ells, we urge you to act immediately, sign an agreement with the CIW to join the Fair Food Program, and adhere to the lasting, enforceable standards that consumers have come to expect, the situation requires, and ten other leading retailers have already embraced.

- 1) **Eric Schlosser**, Author, *Fast Food Nation*, Co-Producer, *Food, Inc.*
- 2) **Raj Patel**, Author, *Stuffed and Starved*, Food and Community Fellow
- 3) **Frances Moore Lappé**, Author, *Diet for a Small Planet*
- 4) **Anna Lappé**, Co-Founder, Small Planet Institute, Author, *Diet for a Hot Planet*
- 5) **Barry Estabrook**, Author, *Tomatoland*
- 6) **Ben Burkett**, Farmer, President, National Family Farm Coalition
- 7) **Jim Harkness**, Executive Director, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- 8) **Mark Muller**, Director, Food and Justice Program, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- 9) **LaDonna Redmond**, Senior Program Associate, Food and Justice Program, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- 10) **Bill Ayres**, Executive Director, Why Hunger
- 11) **Anim Steel**, Founder and Director, Real Food Generation
- 12) **Navina Khanna**, Co-founder and Field Director, Live Real
- 13) **Tom Philpott**, Food and Ag Blogger, Mother Jones Magazine
- 14) **Sanjay Rawal**, Director, *Food Chain*
- 15) **Hai Vo**, Co-founder, Real Food Challenge, Fellowship Coordinator, Live Real
- 16) **Dr. Keecha Harris**, President, KH & Associates, Food and Community Fellow
- 17) **Fred Bahnson**, Director, Food, Faith, and Religious Leadership Initiative, Food and Community Fellow
- 18) **Nicole Betancourt**, Founder, Parent Earth, Director, *Before You Go*, Food and Community Fellow
- 19) **LaVon Griffieon**, Farmer, Co-founder, 1000 Friends of Iowa, Food and Community Fellow
- 20) **Alissa Hamilton**, Author, *Squeezed*, Food and Community Fellow
- 21) **Jenga Mwendo**, Founder, Backyard Gardeners Network, Food and Community Fellow
- 22) **Rebecca Wiggins-Reinhard**, Farm Fresh Director, La Semilla Food Center, Food and Community Fellow
- 23) **Andrea Collier**, Journalist, Author, *Black Woman's Guide to Black Men's Health*, Food and Community Fellow
- 24) **Kelvin Graddick**, Member, West Georgia Farmers Cooperative, Food and Community Fellow
- 25) **Kimberly Seals-Allers**, Author, *Mocha Manual*, Food and Community Fellow
- 26) **Malik Yakini**, Executive Director, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Food and Community Fellow
- 27) **Gerardo Marin**, Co-director, Rooted in Community
- 28) **Rushelle Frazier**, Future Farm
- 29) **Citlalic Jeffers Peña**, 6th Street CSA and Community Center
- 30) **Owen Taylor**, Community Farm and Food Resource Center at Bartram's Garden
- 31) **Christopher Bolden-Newsome**, Newsome Community Farm
- 32) **Tristan Call**, Nashville Greenlands Farm
- 33) **Jalal Sabur**, Wassaic Community Farm
- 34) **Jazmin Francis**, Arise Community Farm
- 35) **Karen Lopez**, Brook Park Community Garden
- 36) **Malin Alegria**, Traditional Native American Farming Association
- 37) **Phil Retberg and Heather Retberg**, Farmer, Quill's End Farm