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FRESH HARVEST REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH CRLA ON MANDATED TRAVEL PAY LAWSUIT

SALINAS, Calif. (November 12, 2018) – Fresh Harvest Inc., the premier labor provider, staffing and harvesting company to the agricultural industry in the western United States, announced today that it has settled a lawsuit brought on by the CRLA to prevent the farm labor contractor from providing ag workers with voluntary transportation on company provided-buses and vans. Under the settlement, Fresh Harvest will not be required to pay for the transportation time of employees to and from work.

“This lawsuit filed against by the CRLA was an anti-employer maneuver designed to put us out of business by creating a new compensation requirement that would have created extraordinary financial pressure on all ag employers,” said Steve Scaroni of Fresh Harvest. He added, “We won this battle, but the war still rages as there are at least three other similar lawsuits filed by anti-agriculture activists like CRLA and the UFW law firm, Martínez Aguilasocho & Lynch, seeking a favorable judgement to create new compensation requirements for both domestic and H-2A workers who utilize free and voluntary-provided shuttles to and from work.”

The settlement did not include any precedent-setting actions that paid employee transportation as a valid claim.

Fresh Harvest was represented by the Saqui Law Group.

“We want to specifically acknowledge the tireless legal work of Jennifer Schermerhorn, Rebecca Hause-Schultz and Mike Saqui of the Saqui Law Group. Their counsel, as well as that of Rob Roy of the Ventura County Agricultural Association, was excellent. Their advice and guidance were critical for us to achieve this victory,” said Scaroni.

Scaroni credited his company’s best-in-class processes including recruiting orientation and extensive training programs as the keys to reaching a settlement as those processes provided factual proof that the allegations made by CRLA were simply not true.

Scaroni concluded, “In navigating this case, it has become definitively apparent that Farm Labor Contractors lacking the necessary sophistication to navigate in California’s ever-increasing Anti-Employer environment not only pose a risk to those who they perform work for, but the entire industry when handling legal matters similar to mandated travel pay.”

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