

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON
PROCLAMATION NO. _____**

Proclaiming March 24 through March 31, 2017 as National Farm Worker Awareness Week in Multnomah County, Oregon.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. All residents of Multnomah County, without exception, benefit from the labor of farmworkers. Worldwide, 85 percent of fruits and vegetables are handpicked by farmworkers.
- b. In the 1940s, migrant Mexican workers became the majority of farmworkers in Oregon. The Bracero Program existed formally in the state of Oregon from 1942-1947. Approximately 15,136 braceros were contracted as farm laborers in the state of Oregon from Mexico during this time. Additional bracero workers were also employed on Oregon railroads from 1943-1946.
- c. During the 1950s, the farm labor force in Oregon continued to be composed of migrant workers. In 1958, a report of the Interim Labor Committee put the substandard living and working conditions for farmworkers on the political and cultural map in Oregon. By the early 1970s, individuals from Mexico or of Mexican descent made up over 95 percent of farmworkers.
- d. Improved living and working conditions have been achieved in large part by PCUN-Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United), Oregon's farmworkers union and largest Latino organization in the state. Founded in 1985 by 80 farmworkers, PCUN has since registered more than 6,000 members, 98% of which are Mexican and Central American immigrants, and to encompass a wide variety of organizing projects.
- e. As a primarily urban county with few farms, Multnomah County and its residents depend on farm workers throughout the State and the Nation for the quality and quantity of our food. Oregon's agribusinesses employ up to 175,000 year-round, seasonal, and migrant farmworkers who are key partners to ensure the safety, security, and sustainability of our agriculture.
- f. Oregon's farmworkers' labor contributes to the generation of more than three billion dollars annually for the State's economy. Farmworkers continue to be among the lowest-paid workers in our state, with jobs that are the third most dangerous in the United States.

- g. Multnomah County has a Latino/a population of eleven (11) percent, and many Latinos and Latinas have farmworker family history or connection. Economic disparities in the Latino community persist in key areas such as income levels, high school graduation rates, and overrepresentation in the justice system.
- h. March 31st is the birthday of César Estrada Chávez, whose dedication to non-violent organizing for just wages, safe labor conditions, and dignity and respect for the women, men, and children in the fields moved him to lead a nation-wide peaceful struggle for farmworker justice that continues to this day.
- i. The hope and determination of César Chávez are echoed in the words that were his rallying cry and that continue to inspire so many today, "Sí, se puede" – "Yes, we can."

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

March 24 through March 31, 2017 as Farmworkers Awareness Week, and honors March 31st, the birthday of César E. Chávez, in Multnomah County, Oregon and urges all citizens to recognize and participate in its observance.

ADOPTED this _____ day of March, 2017.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

Deborah Kafoury, County Chair

**Sharon Meieran
Commissioner District 1**

**Loretta Smith
Commissioner District 2**

**Jessica Vega Pederson
Commissioner District 3**

**Lori Stegmann
Commissioner District 4**

SUBMITTED BY: Ben Duncan, Office of Diversity & Equity

Farmworkers feed the world- 85% of our fruits and vegetables are handpicked. There are an estimated 2-3 million men, women, and children work in the fields in the United States. Farms are in every state, including yours, yet farmworkers remain largely invisible and continue to live and work in horrific conditions.