



August 22, 2013

The Honorable Thom Tillis
Speaker of the NC House of Representatives
NC Legislative Building, Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We are writing to you today to thank you for your strong support of NC agriculture and for helping achieve important legislation in the past session to assist our industry. In particular House Bill 786 is a valuable in that it will aid our farmers in regards to agricultural labor. Unfortunately, Governor McCrory's veto of House Bill 786 puts our industry at risk and has the potential to result in unnecessary and adverse impact to the farm economy in our state.

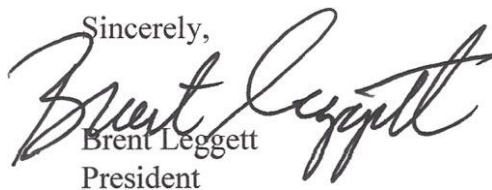
Every farm is a small business. And, tobacco is among the top economic crops we grow in NC. The success of these farms depends greatly on a qualified and stable workforce. The tobacco farm enterprise is very labor intensive and the empirical evidence is overwhelming that the local workforce is inadequate to sustain the labor needs of our family farms.

Regrettably, some people seem to believe that unemployed North Carolinians will flock to farms in search of agricultural jobs. Our members know all too well this view is detached from reality. Few North Carolinians desire to hold seasonal field work in agriculture, and study after study shows there is no evidence that immigrant laborers take farm jobs from local citizens.

The Governor has described HB 786 as a "jobs killing bill". He is inaccurate in his interpretation. Much of this work is performed by seasonal guest workers who in fact receive wage rates established by the US Department of Labor that exceeds minimum wage. We need less bureaucratic red tape and processing costs when hiring these bona fide workers in terms of e-verify thresholds. Unless you are able to over-ride the veto the "jobs killed" that the Governor may actually realize are the family farms themselves.

I urge you to support overriding the Governor's veto. We are encouraging the thousands of tobacco farm families across the state and everyone in the supply chain to all reach out to their legislator at home and asked them to join with you in holding true to their original yes vote.

Thank you for your continued leadership for agriculture.

Sincerely,

Brent Leggett
President


Graham Boyd
Executive Vice President