

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **NASDA Urges Congress to Take Immediate Action on Immigration Reform**

Washington, D.C. ---- The continued prosperity of America's farmers and ranchers depends on immigration reform, say the nation's state agriculture leaders.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) has concluded that Congress must enact immigration reform legislation that provides workable and fair legal channels for farmworkers to enter the country, work, and return home when the season is over.

At the same time, there is a clear and compelling need for the experienced farmworkers already in the country who lack legal status to be given a chance to earn legal status over time, subject to strict conditions.

"The agricultural industries I represent in Washington State are in desperate need for Congress to act on immigration reform," said Valoria Loveland, Washington State Director of Agriculture and NASDA President. "I hear from my colleagues from coast to coast that our Washington tree fruit growers are not alone. Uncertainty about immigration reform and Congress' failure to act is only making labor recruitment for our farmers and ranchers more difficult."

NASDA is urging passage of S.1348, the comprehensive immigration reform bill negotiated among key senators of both parties and the Bush administration. The association views that bill as the best opportunity to pass key elements of the bipartisan and time-tested Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security Act of 2007, or AgJOBS.

"Agricultural employers are facing a rapidly worsening labor shortage. During the critical harvest periods of our highly perishable fruit and vegetable crops, growers across the country will have difficulty finding enough people available to work. Shortages exist despite their best efforts to recruit employees and our best efforts to assist them," Loveland said.

NASDA is comprised of the commissioners, secretaries and directors of the 50 state departments of agriculture. The group represents the state departments of agriculture in the development, implementation, and communication of public policy and programs that support and promote U.S. agriculture. For more information, see NASDA's Web site at <http://www.nasda.org/>.