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United Fresh Commends House Judiciary Committee for Labor Hearing *Submits Testimony Outlining Needs, Solutions for Fresh Produce Industry*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 3, 2019) – The United Fresh Produce Association commends the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship for holding a hearing on “Securing the Future of American Agriculture.” Given the labor challenges facing the produce industry, this hearing could not be more timely, or more important.

“Chairwoman Lofgren understands that our industry is facing an uncertain future without a reliable, legal workforce,” said Tom Stenzel, President and CEO. “We also appreciate the support shown by Ranking Member Buck, and other members of the committee. This is the first hearing in many years where we truly heard a bipartisan commitment to finding real solutions.”

“For too long, the fresh fruit and vegetable industry has struggled to ensure that we have an adequate, legal workforce to harvest and produce the fruits and vegetables that consumers want and need. This hearing is an important first step in the journey to pass legislation that will ensure we have the workforce needed to harvest America’s abundant fruit and vegetables.”

United Fresh is committed to helping pass legislation that addresses the legal status of our current workforce that is improperly documented. In addition to that, we believe it is imperative to also pass legislation that addresses the future needs of our industry. To that end, the United Fresh Board of Directors approved a policy earlier this year that addresses modernizing these key issues on immigration reform:

- Year-round visas for workers rather than temporary or seasonal
- A wage rate that is protective of U.S. workers that is fair and predictable
- Inclusion of workers in minimal processing such as cutting fresh fruits and vegetables
- Housing and transportation allowances for foreign workers
- Stronger administrative role by USDA to support U.S. agriculture’s needs
- Flexibility for workers/employers in portability with up to three-year visas
- No arbitrary cap on the number of visas; the program must reflect the actual demand for workers in the marketplace.

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About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association serves companies at the forefront of the global fresh and fresh-cut produce industry, including growers, shippers, fresh-cut processors, wholesalers,

distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C., United Fresh and its members work year-round to make a difference for the produce industry by driving policies that increase consumption of fresh produce, shaping critical legislative and regulatory action, providing scientific and technical leadership in food safety, quality assurance, nutrition and health, and developing educational programs and business opportunities to assist member companies in growing successful businesses. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org or call 202-303-3400