



complete the database. Additionally, the LC may incur cost savings under a more streamlined ODA process, but also incur costs to adjudicate more appeals.

#### COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, “Domestic farmworkers are the backbone of California’s agricultural industry. Yet they often are the victims of labor violations, such as wage theft, at the hands of their employers.” The author contends this bill “will provide comprehensive compensation protections for domestic farmworkers against wage theft.”
- 2) **FLCs.** Farmworkers are highly vulnerable to workplace violations, especially wage theft, and as a largely immigrant workforce, there is a strong disincentive to report labor violations. Accordingly, existing law requires every person engaged in the business of farm labor contracting be licensed by the LC. An FLC is a person who, for a fee, (a) employs workers to render personal services in connection with the production of farm products under the direction of a third person or (b) recruits, solicits, supplies, or hires workers on behalf of an employer engaged in producing farm products; and who, for a fee, provides in connection at least one of the following services to the worker: (a) furnishing lodging or transportation, (b) supervising or otherwise measuring work, or (c) disbursing wage payments.

According to the California FLC Association, FLCs account for over 40% of California’s agricultural labor force, representing the employment of over 360,000 California farmworkers. This bill requires the provision of additional information related to prior labor violations as part of the FLC licensing process, increases the amount of the surety bond an FLC must deposit with the LC, and accelerates the wage complaint process against an FLC.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is sponsored by the California Farmworker Coalition, which argues, “The surety bond system only fulfills its promise if workers can actually access it. AB 2227 is a common-sense reform that will help ensure that the most exploited workers in our food system have meaningful recourse when their wages are stolen.” This bill is also supported by a large coalition of civil rights, environmental justice, and legal aid groups.

This bill is opposed by a large coalition of agriculture associations, which argues:

The bill now creates additional unnecessary costs and administrative burdens for FLCs, increases demands on overburdened state agencies, potentially puts FLC’s out of business, eliminates jobs for farmworkers, and compromises California’s ability to provide healthy food for our communities.

- 4) **Related Legislation.** AB 1363 (Kalra), Chapter 190, Statutes of 2025, expanded the LC’s foreign labor contractor registration program to include foreign agricultural labor contractors, thus providing certain workplace protections to H-2A visa agricultural workers.

AB 1234 (Ortega) accelerates the LC’s processes to investigate and adjudicate wage theft complaints and authorizes the LC to impose an administrative fee on top of certain ODAs. AB 1234 was ordered to the Senate Inactive File.

AB 2646 (Krell) requires a minimum hourly wage for an approved agricultural employee of \$19.75 per hour. AB 2646 is pending hearing by this committee.

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