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## **Resolution in Solidarity with the Farmworkers in San Quintin (Mexico) and Skagit County (Washington State)**

Whereas, as many as 70,000 farmworkers (jornaleros) in the Valley of San Quintín, Baja California (Mexico) have been waging intermittent strikes and organizing road blockades and mass mobilizations since mid-March 2015 to demand an increase in their daily wage from 100 pesos to 200 pesos per day [raise from \$7.50 per day to \$15], an eight-hour workday, health care, overtime pay and vacation days, an end to the widespread sexual abuse, and, most important, the legal recognition of their independent union — the Alianza de Organizaciones Nacional, Estatal y Municipal por la Justicia Social del Valle de San Quintín (Alliance National, State and Municipal Organizations for Social Justice in the Valley of San Quintín, or Alianza) — as the bargaining agent for these 70,000 workers; and

Whereas, these farmworkers (many of them indigenous workers from Oaxaca) pick strawberries, tomatoes, and other fruit primarily for export to the United States under the label of Driscoll's, through its Mexican subsidiary, BerryMex; and

Whereas, the farmworkers are currently “covered” by “protection contracts” signed between the growers and the CTM, the CROM and the CROC — essentially government-run unions — where the contracts signed are nothing more than sweetheart deals favoring the growers; and

Whereas, articles in the mainstream media about the conditions of farmworkers in San Quintín describe rat-infested camps, some without functioning toilets, with workers routinely having their wages illegally withheld, and many facing debt after being gouged by the overpricing of necessities sold at company stores, and with pay so low that it amounts to less than one-tenth of what U.S.-based farmworkers earn”; and

Whereas, over the weekend of May 9-10, 2015, the Baja California government, instead of opening negotiations with the farmworkers, as promised, sent in police to quash the farmworkers' protest, severely wounding 70 workers, many with rubber bullets shot at close range, leaving some of the workers in critical condition; and

Whereas, the repression against the farmworkers of San Quintín made front-page news and created a huge backlash across Mexico, forcing the government to (1) meet with representatives of the Alianza and promise to legally recognize the workers' independent union (promising a “registro” to the Alianza) and (2) promise to implement many of the demands raised by the workers that pertain to Mexican labor law; and

Whereas, the growers are refusing to abide by the agreement between the Mexican government and the Alianza, arguing that they have more than 60 signed contracts with the CTM, the CROM, and the CROC, and that they will therefore not recognize nor open negotiations with the Alianza; and



Whereas, the leadership of the Alianza, soon after the strike began, issued a call to the U.S. labor and community movements to organize a boycott across the United States of Driscoll's, extending the boycott of Driscoll's that was launched one year earlier by the Familias Unidas por la Justicia; and

Whereas, upon learning of the strike of the farmworkers in San Quintín, unionists and community activists in cities throughout California and other U.S. states launched a campaign incorporating the struggle of the San Quintín workers into the Driscoll's boycott; and

Whereas, many of the San Quintin farmworkers have either worked in the farms owned by Sakuma Brothers in the state of Washington, or have family who work for Sakuma Brothers, where the workers have been subjected to a wide range of abuse for years, such as inadequate piece rates, wage theft, racist and sexist abuse by supervisors, substandard housing and continuous retaliation for their efforts to improve their conditions; and

Whereas, the Washington State AFL-CIO has recognized the independent union formed in 2013 by the Sakuma farmworkers — the Familias Unidas for la Justicia — and has endorsed and supported the boycott of Sakuma Brothers Farms; and

Whereas, Miles Joseph Reiter is the Chairman of the Board of Driscoll's Inc and is also a member of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture and this board has responsibility for oversight of this industry. We question and oppose his serving on this board due to the conditions of the striking farm workers and the families in San Quintin, Baja, California;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO, goes on record in support of the struggle of the 70,000 farmworkers in San Quintin and the 468 farmworkers in Skagit County, Washington, for better wages, working conditions, and the recognition of their fighting unions — Familias Unidas por la Justicia and the Alianza de Organizaciones Nacional, Estatal y Municipal por la Justicia Social del Valle de San Quintín (Alliance of Farm Workers of San Quintín) — as the legitimate bargaining agents for these workers; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council opposes the “protection contracts” signed between the growers and the company unions, and urges the Mexican government to formally give the “registro” to the Alianza, as promised, that it meet the Alianza's demands pertaining to Mexico's labor laws, — and that the government use all its powers to compel the growers to rescind the “protection contracts” with the company unions, negotiate directly with the Alianza, and agree to increase the workers' wages to 200 pesos a day, while resolving the other demands raised by the workers; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council reiterates its call on Sakuma Farms to rehire strikers and sign a contract with Familias Unidas por la Justicia in Washington State; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council calls upon the California Federation of Labor and the entire trade union movement in the United States to add Driscoll's to their “Do Not Patronize” list and to actively promote a boycott of Driscoll's – as well as build ties of solidarity with the San Quintín farmworkers, organizing union-to-union solidarity, visits to San

Quintín, and tours to the United States of representatives of the Alianza so that these workers can tell their stories directly to U.S. workers; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council will link the struggle of the Sakuma Brothers and Driscoll's workers in the state of Washington, to the struggle of the San Quintín workers; and

Be It Finally Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council will send this resolution to the Alianza and Sakuma Farms workers, with copies to the broader labor movement, to be used as a template for further resolutions in solidarity with the farmworkers of San Quintín and Familias Unidas por la Justicia in Washington State.

Submitted by Alan Benjamin, OPEIU 3 and Maria Guillen, SEIU 102, and adopted unanimously by the San Francisco Labor Council on August 10, 2015.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Paulson", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Tim Paulson  
Executive Director

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