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## **Newsom Administration Expedites Upgrades to California's Migrant Farmworker Family Housing**

*\$30 Million Investment Part of Strategy to Improve Access to Quality Housing for State's Biggest Economic Sector*

**SACRAMENTO** – Newsom Administration officials today detailed a \$30 million investment to upgrade the state's 24 migrant housing centers, thus creating more welcoming spaces for upwards of 11,000 farmworkers and their families when they return this coming spring.

State and local officials were joined by Senator Anna Caballero (D-Salinas) in announcing the \$30 million California Comeback Plan investment – the largest of its kind – at the Hollister Migrant Housing Center, which has served thousands of farmworker families for more than 50 years. The investment is part of Newsom's broader housing plan that has released billions of dollars over just a few months.

"This administration is taking every step to advance housing solutions that are inclusive and equitable. This includes housing for seasonal farmworkers and their families," said Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramírez of California's Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency. "I had the opportunity to visit with residents and operators of these centers with Senator Caballero, Housing and Community Development (HCD) Director Gustavo Velasquez and other local leaders to see firsthand the need to improve the livability and condition of these communities that nearly 1600 farmworker families call home. And now, I am pleased that HCD has moved swiftly to deploy these funds appropriated by the Governor and Legislature in the Comeback CA Budget to support migrant farmworkers and their families."

Today's announcement comes on the heels of a federal infrastructure plan that will bolster what California has already begun, including expanding broadband and upgrading water infrastructure, especially in farmworker and rural communities.

HCD Director Gustavo Velasquez, whose team oversees the 24 migrant housing centers and administers state funding to the local entities that manage the centers said, "This investment is part of the state's multipronged strategy to address the disparities in housing faced by farmworkers. We know firsthand that providing quality affordable homes and services during the months migrant families are here makes a big difference in their children's outcomes and is better for our state. We must be vigilant and ensure a high quality of living for those who do the backbreaking work to feed this nation."

Senator Caballero, Director Velasquez, and San Benito County officials met with Hollister housing center residents to share the good news and discuss other strategies the state is implementing to improve access to and quality of housing and support services available for the state's farming workforce, which has been historically underfunded.

"From spring through the fall season, hundreds of families relocate to migrant centers all over rural California to support the peak harvest season to guarantee that families all over the country continue to receive the fruits and vegetables that we all love. Laborers responsible for a reliable harvest need quality and safe housing, childcare and services so that they and their children can be cared for as they perform their work as an essential worker," Senator Caballero said. "I believe this \$30 million investment in the Office of Migrant Services is necessary to support the unique needs of farmworkers – the labor force behind California's billion-dollar agriculture industry."

Improvements to many of the migrant housing centers include adding broadband Internet, renovating apartments and community spaces, adding or improving playgrounds and tot lots, and upgrading old infrastructure, among other renovations. Essential services onsite include children's education, health education, foodbanks, and more.

"Farmworkers are this state's most vulnerable essential workers and they deserve affordable, high-quality housing. Unfortunately, far too often, they are forced into unhealthy and overcrowded spaces in order to save money and live close to where they work," said Asm. Robert Rivas (D-Salinas). "This bold new investment from the state will begin to address not only the housing disparities that these essential workers face but also the intersecting issues of broadband access and safe, outdoor recreational space. I applaud the Governor and the Department of Housing and Community Development for this decisive step forward."

HCD is implementing other ways to help farmworker and rural communities, including releasing an additional \$100 million in farmworker housing grants, targeting Homekey funds – money to acquire and construct homes to prevent and end homelessness – in rural areas, and expanding efforts around employee housing and mobilehome regulations and funding.

"We commend the Newsom Administration and the Legislature for allocating this much-needed funding for upgrades – not just for the Migrant Center in San Benito County, but for all 24 migrant centers statewide," said Bea Gonzales, Chair of the San Benito County Board of Supervisors. "The hard-working men and women who live in these centers deserve a safe and secure place to call home."

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*The California Department of Housing and Community Development is dedicated to the preservation and expansion of safe and affordable housing, so more Californians have a place to call home. Our team works to ensure an adequate supply of housing for Californians and promotes the growth of strong communities through its leadership, policy and program development. For more information, please visit [www.hcd.ca.gov](http://www.hcd.ca.gov) and follow us on Twitter, @California\_HCD; Facebook, @CaliforniaHCD; and LinkedIn.*