



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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March 16, 2021

Senator Mike McGuire
State Capitol Room 5064
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 685, Employment of Minors in Agricultural Packing Plants

Dear Senator McGuire,

We are writing this letter in support of SB 685, the renewal of SB 702, Employment of Minors in Agricultural Packing Plants. The original bill SB 1988 (Mike Thompson) passed in 1996. The bill allows students to work in the sheds 10 hours a day, 60 hours a week. The long hours are necessary because it is harvest time; utilizing the facilities to the max is a must in order to get the crop packed before it gets too ripe.

As you know, Lake County is a small rural county with few employment opportunities for youth. This is a unique opportunity for a wide spectrum of students, from the college bound to at risk youth, to have valuable work experience while connecting to the county's agricultural roots.

The pear sheds are a unique workplace, in that students of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds work together. Many young people who have not had positive experiences in school find that they can excel and get positive reinforcement and success with their summer job.

Because the youth can work overtime, they earn very good money for a summer job. In addition to earning money, they learn good work habits, experience the satisfaction of completing a job on their own, and gain the desire to further their skills and education to enable them to get a better job as adults. Many students go on to higher education and are motivated to finish school.

This is a win-win for the entire community. The students are occupied at a productive endeavor, their earnings enrich their lives in many ways, and they are participating in the rural tradition of their community.

In 2019, 25,946 tons of California pears were packed and processed in Lake County and were sent to the fresh market with a gross value of \$14,656,706.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors respectfully thanks you in advance for your support of SB 685, as it means a great deal to our local economy here in Lake County.

Sincerely,

Bruno Sabatier, Chair