



To All News Editors
For Immediate Release, Friday May 19 2006

GOLDEN EAGLES FARMS MIGRANT WORKER THREATENED WITH FORCED REPATRIATION TO MEXICO FOR VOICING CONCERNS ABOUT WORKPLACE AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Human rights organizations urge federal and provincial governments and Francesco Aquilini, Co-owner of the Vancouver Canucks and Managing Director of Aquilini Investment Group with holdings in Golden Eagle Group, to rectify situation.

PRESS CONFERENCE: WEDNESDAY MAY 24 AT 10 AM
BC FEDERATION OF LABOUR OFFICES, #200 - 5118 Joyce Street

(VANCOUVER)—Marcos Baac, a Mexican migrant farm worker who was employed by Golden Eagle Farms in Pitt Meadows through a contract under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, received notice on May 9th that he would be sent back to Mexico immediately.

Baac believes that this forced repatriation is a reprisal for being vocal in raising concerns about the farm's poor working and living conditions. In April 2006, after failed attempts to bring their concerns directly to the employer and the Mexican consulate, Baac, along with 31 other workers at the farm, wrote a public letter outlining several workplace and living condition grievances.

The manager of Golden Eagle Farms has provided no reasons to Baac for the contract termination but has hinted that it is related to the public letter. **Marcos Baac** says "All I did was write, along with other workers, a simple and legitimate letter. I am now living in fear, stress, and great anxiety." Vancouver Canucks co-owner Francesco Aquilini has holdings in the farm.

Organizations and unions are deeply concerned with the situation of agricultural migrant workers like Marcos and the severe consequences he is being punished with. **Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour**, states: "Migrant workers in Canada have all the same rights as any other worker, as far as the labour movement is concerned, and deserve the full protection of the law. We are calling on Labour Minister Mike de Jong to restore the government's ability to enforce labour standards so no worker -- citizen or migrant -- is subject to the exploitation we see in this case."

Migrant farm workers are in a particularly precarious position due to lack of labour protection and lack of permanent residency status. **MP Bill Siksay, NDP Citizenship and Immigration Critic**, states "Canada's policies on temporary workers demand our attention. We know that temporary workers are among the most exploited workers in Canada. Their access to labour standards protection falls far short of justice and fairness, health and safety issues dominate their workplace, and access to programmes such as EI, CPP and language training are limited. Even though their labour is crucial to the Canadian economy, they are not afforded the possibility of permanent residence."

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