December 6, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.  20515

Dear Madame Speaker:

We understand that the House of Representatives may soon consider a version of the DREAM Act legislation. We certainly understand that there is little time in the remaining days of the 111th Congress for consideration of immigration reform. However, we urge that it is of utmost importance to U.S. agriculture and the U.S. economy that the bipartisan AgJOBS bill, cosponsored by Representatives Howard Berman and Adam Putnam, be part of any immigration-related legislation considered by Congress this year.

AgJOBS has had wide, bipartisan support for many years. It is supported by labor and employers and its passage is of vital importance to our economy. Addressing the farm labor issue and ensuring a stable and legally authorized farm workforce is a job creation and retention issue. It is widely accepted that, on average, every farm owner and farm employee results in the creation of three or more non-agriculture jobs in the local or regional economy. We must not continue to export our agricultural production and the economic benefits that flow from that production – yet that is exactly what is happening as a result of the stalled AgJOBS legislation.

Agriculture, including the floriculture community, has worked for passage of AgJOBS for over ten years. As important as passage of the DREAM Act may be, it surely is no more important than securing an authorized workforce, ensuring appropriate labor protections, and helping our agricultural economy. SAF’s members – employers in every part of the country – will be unable to understand a vote that does not value our economy and agricultural production, and the livelihood of thousands of workers, employers, and their families, as much as it values the children and students who are also the victims of the broken U.S. immigration system.

We strongly urge that you vote for DREAM only if an AgJOBS-type component is part of the legislative package.

SAF is the national trade association that represents over 10,000 small businesses located in every state, including growers, wholesalers, retail florists, manufacturers, importers, suppliers and wire services. Floriculture has grown over recent years to a level of more than $35 billion at the retail level. At farmgate value, floral and nursery sales represent about 15 percent of total crop sales.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our views.

[Signature]

Peter J. Moran  
Executive Vice President and CEO