



Mike Vail, President
Hannaford Supermarkets
145 Pleasant Hill Road
Scarborough, ME 04074

April 24, 2023

Dear Mike Vail,

We are writing to you as members of Vermont Renew's, a coalition of grassroots organizations and allied organizations that collectively represent thousands of Vermonters. Vermont Renew's is connected to Renew New England, a larger multi-racial, regional coalition across the six New England states, composed of over 150 environmental justice advocates, frontline communities, Indigenous tribes, organized labor groups, racial justice organizations, and youth groups. Members of our organizations – including thousands of working class Vermonters, farmers, union members and representatives, state representatives, community leaders, and Indigenous leaders – oppose the appalling, racist injustices that migrant workers experience, and Hannaford's failure to stand with those who supply your products and feed our communities.

Migrant workers are the backbone of American agriculture and deserve respect and dignity, yet the immigrant workers who drive Hannaford's profits are suffering from severe human rights abuses. Migrant Justice has documented that over 30% of workers who supply milk to Hannaford have no time off, are consistently deprived of adequate sleep, are frequently paid below minimum wage, are victims of [wage theft](#), and are continuously exposed to dangerous chemicals and other workplace safety violations, resulting in a high rate of workplace illness and injury. **Such injustices are only possible due to systemic racism that robs Latin American farmworkers of their voice and power – but rather than being a part of a solution, you take advantage of this vulnerability.**

We Know Hannaford Is Better Than This

It is clear that Hannaford cares; you know that your shoppers value food that is [“responsibly harvested and sourced”](#), and have attempted to address the issue. But these [minor remedies are insufficient](#) and, in truth, make it seem as if Hannaford is attempting to deceive their loyal shoppers. While you strive to conduct business in an “ethically responsible manner that recognizes and protects relationships with associates, customers, shareholders, vendors and communities,” your operations, in reality, brazenly violate your values by misleading and taking advantage of farmworkers, their families, and our entire community. **Given the choice between respecting our community and retaining integrity, Hannaford disappointingly continues to reject solutions, instead favoring exorbitant profits.**

This year we saw your executives and investors celebrate a [60% increase in profits, with sales topping \\$80 billion](#). **While the workers who produce the goods that generate your profits struggle to put food on their tables, you and your investors look the other way and reward yourselves with [generous bonuses and over a billion dollars in stock dividends](#).** This undeniable result of your pursuit to maximize profits at any cost is an inexcusable violence upon farmworkers and their families – and therefore a violation of the dignity of our entire community. We implore you to reconsider this choice. We know that the executives at Hannaford can choose to remedy this and embody the values that you hold dearly.

We Urge You to Join Us: Choose Respect Over Greed

We urge Hannaford to adopt the solutions that farmworkers are asking for: Milk With Dignity. These solutions offer true, systemic justice for Vermont's farmworkers that are vetted and developed by farmworkers themselves: standards for labor and housing, independent audits, monitoring of complaints, and a Milk with Dignity certification that your products are sourced free from human rights abuses. This solution would not only benefit Vermont's farmworkers; Hannaford would be seen by consumers across the Northeast as a shining example of food justice and sustainability, farms would receive a fair price for their products, and shoppers would let go of their hesitations, knowing that the food they're buying is not contributing to the suffering of others.

The Milk With Dignity program is a powerful, yet reasonable, solution and your continued refusal appears to your community as a choice to stand by practices of greed, dishonesty, and racism. Farmworkers are asking for basic human rights and fair treatment that is afforded to all other workers: paid sick days and vacation days, fair wages, safe housing, access to safety equipment, a guaranteed day of rest each week, protection from violence and sexual harassment, and access to medical treatment from workplace injuries. We know that if you truly knew the impact of your actions, you too would take a stand and immediately adopt Milk with Dignity.

The members of our coalition, made up of thousands of workers, everyday Vermonters, farmers, activists, state representatives and BIPOC leaders, see the mistreatment of migrant farmworkers as an affront to all Vermonters. When you fail to stand up to this mistreatment, and rather take advantage of our most vulnerable community members, you show our community how you would treat all of us if given the opportunity – or if our skin color was different. Farmworkers, no matter their skin color or nationality, deserve to live and work in dignity. **Farmworkers and our organizations are united in calling for Milk With Dignity. We respectfully request that you respond to this letter to inform us of your position and of whether or not you intend to join the Milk with Dignity Program. Our members and constituents eagerly await your response.**

Sincerely,

Members of The Vermont Renews Coalition;

Rights & Democracy

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

350Vermont

Vermont State Labor Council, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

And Vermont Renews allies;

Food Solutions New England

Central Vermont Democratic Socialists of America

