



**B.C.
FEDERATION
OF LABOUR
(CLC)**

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President

Angela Schira
Secretary-Treasurer

April 3, 2009

Iain Black
Minister of Labour
Province of British Columbia
602 – 205 Newport Drive,
Port Moody, BC V3H 5C9

Dear Minister Black:

**RE: MARCH 2007 VAN ACCIDENT AND SEPTEMBER 2008 MUSHROOM
FARMWORKER ACCIDENT – SIX FARMWORKERS KILLED**

After the deaths of Sarbjit Kaur Sidhu, Amarjit Kaur Bal and Sukhvinder Kaur Punia in 2007, and of Ut Tran, Jimmy Chan and Han Pham in 2008, their families, friends, and communities are still waiting for the government to take the action necessary to protect farmworkers in the province.

The families have worked hard to get action on these issues, not only in memory of their loved ones, but to ensure that all farmworkers are provided the workplace protections they deserve.

It is long overdue that the government take immediate action on the following:

1. The government must end the discrimination and make a commitment to ensure farmworkers are covered by the same employment standards and workplace rights that other workers in British Columbia enjoy;
2. The RCMP recommended that criminal charges be laid, but the Crown Counsel chose to pursue lesser charges under the Motor Vehicle Act. In December, 2008 the van driver was fined \$2,000 and banned from driving for one year. Furthermore, the company was not fined at all due to the fact that it had filed for bankruptcy. This sends the message that farmworker safety can be ignored. The Crown must act on the recommendation to lay criminal charges;
3. The BC Coroner's office must immediately set a date for an inquest. An inquest was originally scheduled for April 2008, but postponed. The purpose of the inquest is to prevent similar accidents in the future;
4. Following the van crash, the government increased the number of roadside inspections of farm vehicles. This number has since declined significantly. The government must

increase the number of vehicle inspections and improve the procedure for certifications.

5. The government must ban the use of 15-passenger vans as worker transportation vehicles.

We are determined to keep up the fight to provide farmworkers with greater protection so that no other workers die in the fields, the greenhouses and the farms and that no other families have to go through this painful experience of losing a loved one because they went to work and did not come home.

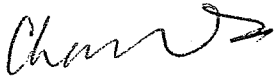
Sincerely,

JIM SINCLAIR, President, B.C. Federation of Labour

CHARAN GILL, Canadian Farmworkers Union



Friends and family members of the van crash victims



Nirmal Singh Kangra

Kulvir Singh

Jaminder S. Hans

M.K. Dhaliwal

Amagjit Sidhu

Sukhmander Dhillon

Anwar Singh

Jagdeep & Sidhu

Pravinder Kaur

Mansinder Singh

Parvinder Singh

Parvinder Singh



JS/mz

0500-091et-JS-Minister Iain Black



MANJAR SINGH MEELU
Manjara Singh Punia
Rasendra Singh Ladhwa -