

**Religious Leaders for Tobacco Farm Worker Justice**

PO Box 10645  
Raleigh, NC 27605  
July 17, 2014

Ms. Susan Cameron, President and CEO  
Reynolds American, Inc.  
401 North Main St.  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Dear Ms. Cameron,

Greetings from Religious Leaders for Tobacco Farm Worker Justice. We are faith leaders from many diverse traditions who are concerned about farmer workers in the tobacco fields under contract to Reynolds American. We write, as we did in 2012, to RAI's Board of Directors to express our continuing concern about the working and living conditions of tobacco farm workers.

We believe that all persons are created in the image of God and have intrinsic value. We seek justice for all workers and especially for farm workers who are some of the most vulnerable workers in our society.

Therefore, as someone with the power to make a difference in the lives of tobacco farm workers, we make two requests of you.

First, we call on Reynolds American to negotiate a memorandum of understanding – as requested by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee – that will guarantee freedom of association, without retaliation, to farm workers employed on Reynolds American's contract farms.

Second, we call on Reynolds to prohibit growers from retaliating against farm workers for exercising basic workplace rights. Workers who sign union cards, advocate for higher wages, or organize for better living and working conditions should not be subject to retaliation.

By taking these two steps, Reynolds American can finally implement its stated commitment to respect universally recognized human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights include freedom of association, and the right to form and/or join a labor union without retaliation.

Workers organized in a labor union will be able to work with Reynolds American and its growers to address many of the grave conditions outlined in the Oxfam America – FLOC report, *State of Fear* including sub-minimum wages, human trafficking, pesticide poisoning, inadequate housing and nicotine poisoning. In addition, a recent report by Human Rights Watch also found child labor to be a serious problem in North Carolina tobacco fields. These abuses will not end

until farmworkers have a safe and effective way to speak out when abuses happen. This can only happen when workers are organized and have a recognized voice in the work place.

Despite years of talk, little has changed. It is past time for RAI, the largest tobacco manufacturer in North Carolina and a leader in the tobacco industry, to fulfill its stated commitment to human rights, rights that are due to all of God's people. We urge you to work with FLOC to bring justice to tobacco farm workers on RAI contract farms by guaranteeing freedom of association.

Thank you very much for addressing these concerns. We will be in touch with you to learn what progress is being made on these matters. Please contact Rev. Lindsay C. Comstock at 919-807-8707 or [lcomstock@nfwm.org](mailto:lcomstock@nfwm.org) if you have any questions.

Faithfully,

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Dianne Aid, TSSF, President, Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (Kent, WA)

Jake Aikenhead, Congress Participant, Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (Chicago, IL)

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Elder Patricia Parker, Pastor, East Percy Street Christian Church (DOC) (Greenwood, MS)

Carol Parsons, Clinton Christian Church (Clinton, MO)

Diana Payton, Central Woodward Christian Church (Troy, MI)

Claudia Griffin Pearson, Second Bethlehem Church of Christ (St. Albans, NY)

Rev. Jon G. Pedigo, Pastor, Our Lady of Guadalupe (San Jose, CA)

Julie Peebles, Pastor, Congregational UCC (Greensboro, NC)

Rev. Ilse Peetz, Church Women United (Pearblossom, CA)

Lindsay Peletier, Loyola University (Chicago, IL)

Manuel Pervez, Cincinnati Interfaith Worker Center (Cincinnati, OH)

Rev. Dr. Nancy E. Petty, Pastor, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

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Barbara Post, First Christian Church (Orange, CA)

The Rev. Don Prange, Ministries in Economic Justice (Lovettsville, VA)

Christina Presley, Central Christian Church (Indianapolis, IN)

Rev. Margaret L. Pride, Memorial Boulevard Christian Church (St. Louis, MO)

Sister Mary Priniski, OP, Catholic Committee of the South

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