

U.S. Department of Labor Secures Judgments to Enhance Farmworker Transportation Safety in California’s Central Valley

Actions Spurred by Fatal 2015 Crash Involving Grower’s Farm Labor Contractor

FRESNO, CA – After a U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division investigation, Central Valley garlic grower Valley Garlic Inc. and its farm labor contractor X-Treme Ag Labor Inc. have signed consent judgments, entered by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Fresno. The U.S. Department of Labor sued Valley Garlic Inc. and X-Treme Ag Labor Inc. for being jointly responsible in a June 2015 crash that took the lives of four farmworkers who were being transported to work, including a 16-year-old minor.

X-Treme Ag Labor Inc. and its owner Isabella Camacho entered into a consent judgment requiring them to pay \$46,000 in back wages and penalties, and to be forever barred from acting as a farm labor contractor. In the judgement, X-Treme Ag and Camacho also admitted to violating MSPA’s transportation safety requirements and that they did so in connection with their work for Valley Garlic.

The consent judgment against Valley Garlic Inc. requires the company to take steps to prevent future violations and unauthorized transportation including:

- Exclusively hiring farm labor contractors that are transportation-authorized and that can legally and safely transport farmworkers;
- Specifically discussing transportation in contract deliberations with farm labor contractors;
- Auditing their fields for compliance with federal labor laws at random times during peak harvest; and
- Paying \$45,900 in civil penalties.

Division investigators determined that the workers were not wearing seatbelts, the driver had no valid driver’s license, and the vehicle was unsafe. The Department brought suit under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), which requires growers and packers to take specific steps to ensure that all farmworkers are transported safely to their fields.

“These two judgments send a message that will result in safer transportation to and from the fields for hundreds of hardworking men and women,” said Nora Pedraza, Wage and Hour Division Assistant District Director in Fresno. “The Department of Labor offers a wide variety of compliance assistance and educational opportunities for employers to learn how to comply with the law. We owe it to the memory of these farmworkers to do whatever we can to prevent any future such tragedies.”

MSPA protects migrant and seasonal agricultural workers by establishing employment standards related to wages, housing, transportation, disclosures, and recordkeeping. For general information on MSPA, please see the [Employment Law Guide](#) or the Wage and Hour Division’s [MSPA fact sheet](#).

To operate legally as farm labor contractors, individuals and companies must register with the U.S. Department of Labor. Farm labor contractors that intend to house, transport, or drive a

migrant or seasonal agricultural worker must meet special requirements. Application materials and instructions can be found online at https://www.dol.gov/whd/forms/fts_wh530.htm

Employees and employers with questions about MSPA or any of the federal laws administered by the Division should call the agency's toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). All calls are confidential. More information also is available online at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/>.