



MONTEREY COUNTY **AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER**

For immediate release
August 20, 2020

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MONTEREY COUNTY PROTECTS FARM WORKERS FROM WILDFIRE SMOKE

SALINAS – The Monterey County Board of Supervisors, Chairman Christopher Lopez, Supervisor Luis Alejo, Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales, and agricultural industry leaders came together to request N95 respirators for the essential agricultural workforce. “This is the same group that created the [Advisory for Agricultural Worker Protection During COVID-19 Crisis on the Central Coast of California](#)”, said Gonzales. As a result of this request, the County secured 100,000 N95 respirators to protect this critical part of our local workforce. This essential workforce feeds the state, the nation, and the world.

The partnership, including the Coastal Growers Association, Grower-Shipper Association of Central California, Monterey County Farm Bureau, and the Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association with County leaders, secured the N95 respirators through a request placed with California's Office of Emergency Services. This week, the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office distributed an existing stock of 10,000 N95 respirators to the agricultural industry to help protect agricultural workers from wildfire smoke. Before this, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, in partnership with Supervisors and agricultural industry leaders, distributed 2.4 million free surgical masks to protect the essential agricultural workforce from COVID-19.

The additional, limited supply of respirators will be made available to agricultural businesses through the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office to support the industry's measures to protect agricultural workers from wildfire smoke. Moreover, due to the wide-scale shortage of N95 respirators, it is important to be mindful of best practices and practical applications respecting the use and/or [reuse](#) of N95 respirators per Centers for Disease Control guidance where supply chain [shortages](#) are resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

These respirators are being made free of costs to growers and farm labor contractors for their essential agricultural workers.

Agricultural businesses can reach out to the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at 831-759-7340 or at 281-PUE-Workstation@co.monterey.ca.us to request masks. Masks will be apportioned based on need.