I would like to observe that it would be most definitely unfair against the American farmer and the consuming public to pass this legislation. It could mean the strangulation of our food supply by a relatively few persons.

The absolute power that would be vested in the unions by this proposed measure would lead, in my opinion, to the total corruption of our way of life, or the demise of the agricultural industry as we know it today.

Why would Congress consider imposing such likely disaster on our Nation's vegetable growers?

We strongly recommend that action on this bill be deferred.

STATEMENT BY JOHN HEINEY, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS

My name is John Heiney. I am Executive Vice President of the National Council of Agricultural Employers. The Council is presenting this statement in behalf of agricultural employers in 36 states accounting for hundreds of growers, and for the vast majority of farm workers engaged in the production of perishable fruits and vegetables. The Council wishes to express its opposition to H.R. 4769 which would amend the National Labor Relations Act to make its provisions applicable to agriculture.

It is notable that numerous amendments have been proposed through the years to this end but since its inception agriculture has been exempt in the judgement of the Congress. Agriculture has not changed in that it was a basic factor in our economy in 1935, has continued so for 32 years, and is so today. It is significant that the Congress again is being asked to do what the labor unions cannot do for themselves.

The Council is not opposed to workers belonging to unions; or to any other organization they choose. The Council is opposed to a regulation that compels employment solely of workers who must join a union as a condition of employment and who jeopardize the grower's very existence through the instrument of a strike capable of destroying a crop.

Farm workers themselves have shown no interest of consequence in belonging to labor unions. Efforts of unions to organize speak for themselves.

It is significant that George Meaney has stated that his organizers were sent to California five years or so ago, an expensive program, and three years ago he was compelled to report no success. Recently, he says, there have been successful strikes by Cesar Chavez. (He referred to the DiGiorgio contract, obtained on the dubious and inconclusive merits of the secondary boycott). No single fact is more notable in considering this bill than the incontrovertible fact that farm workers in California are not flocking to the union standard. Mr. Meaney and his aides have almost 400,000 farm workers as prospects. Virtually none, over a period of years, have become union members.

Despite all that has been said about the farmer not being at the mercy of nature, the fact remains that a cucumber or melon will not change its maturing habits to satisfy a labor union or the NLRB.

Proponents of this bill speak of unionizing in the canning industry, an ally of farming but unrelated in respect to labor unions. They say: if you have a union in a cannery you can have one in the field. This is not true. The processor is favored with a number of advantages not given the grower. For example, Mr. Walter Reuther illustrated the point with the canning of fish. A cannery can shut down for whatever reason and the fish continue to swim about until called for. Tomatoes, corn, beans, asparagus, peaches, plums—a dozen other fruits and vegetables develop overnight and must be harvested or lost. Melons often must be picked twice daily. A punitive act by a labor union in 24 hours could destroy a grower, who is controlled by conditions of no influence on the canner. Those who engage in first processing after the harvest can operate successfully under collective bargaining. It is important to note that this applies not only to fruits and vegetables but to all perishables, including grains and dairy.

Farm parity figures show that the farmer is in a cost-price squeeze. Mr. Reuther has referred to his experience in collective bargaining in the auto industry, but Ford or GM solves the matter of rising costs simply by upping product prices. The farmer's costs are up. A farm tractor that cost $1,800 in 1949 costs $7,000 today. Labor costs have increased substantially over the years. Unionizing of farm labor will increase the farmer's costs of doing business and unlike the auto manufacturer the raising and selling of perishable merchandise doesn't