



Department of Social Development and World Peace

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August 21, 2003

Emil J. Brolick
Chief Executive Officer
Taco Bell Corp.
17901 Von Karman
Irvine, California 92614

Dear Mr. Brolick:

On behalf of the Domestic Policy Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I am writing to request that you intercede with Florida tomato growers to resolve a longstanding labor impasse with the farm workers who pick the crops. The Bishops' Conference fully realizes that the struggle for decent wages and benefits lies with the workers and the growers, and only secondarily with companies such as Taco Bell that purchase significant amounts of the tomato products. As the Chief Executive Officer of one of the largest purchasers of tomato products from Florida, you are in a very important position to insist and encourage greater accountability on the part of the growers and producers of tomato products from Florida in treating their workers more fairly.

The Catholic bishops have been outspoken advocates for the rights of farm workers. For decades, we have worked for higher wages, increasing access to health care, expanding educational opportunities, improving housing conditions, and for year-round employment for farm workers. In short, their lives too often lack adequate security, dignity, and reasonable comfort.

Bishop John Nevins of Venice, Florida who has met with the workers, prayed with and for the workers, has asked us to bring this conflict to national attention in the hope that it would encourage a fair and peaceful solution to this dispute. We prefer first to seek your leadership in bringing about a substantive meeting of the Florida growers (and the appropriate labor contractors) with the leaders of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in an attempt to resolve this longstanding labor impasse.

Mr. Brolick, thank you for your time and attention to this matter, I look forward to hearing from you, and offering you my assistance in any way that I can be of help.

With every best wish I am,

Faithfully yours,

Theodore Cardinal McCarrick
Archbishop of Washington
Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee