



Civil Rights Department

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November 28, 2022
For Immediate Release

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Farm Labor Contractor to Pay \$600,000 to Resolve CRD Disability Discrimination Complaint

Contractor will compensate workers and improve its reasonable accommodation procedures

Sacramento - The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) has reached a \$600,000 settlement with farm labor contractor Esparza Enterprises (Esparza), based in Bakersfield, that will provide monetary and injunctive relief to workers who sought reasonable accommodations for their disabilities.

In 2018, an Esparza employee filed an administrative complaint with CRD alleging that Esparza unlawfully denied her disability-related accommodations and terminated her because of a temporary disability that resulted from a workplace injury. CRD investigated the complaint on behalf of a group or class of similarly situated employees. The parties mediated the complaint with CRD's Dispute Resolution Division, resulting in settlement before any lawsuit was filed.

"Workers in every California industry, including those who do the essential work of planting, harvesting, and packaging our food, are guaranteed the right to reasonable accommodations and to participate in a meaningful interactive process," said CRD Director Kevin Kish. "This settlement ensures that affected workers receive compensation and that Esparza's reasonable accommodation procedures are consistent with the requirements of California's Fair Employment and Housing Act."

Pursuant to the agreement, Esparza will pay up to \$550,000 into a settlement fund to compensate workers employed by Esparza from July 26, 2016, October 19, 2022, who suffered a disability affecting their ability to work during the relevant time period and who either (1) did not receive a requested accommodation, or (2) were deterred from seeking a reasonable accommodation. Esparza will also pay CRD's attorneys' fees and costs and will update its reasonable accommodation policies with review by CRD, provide annual training for managers and supervisors, and add information to its employee handbook (in English and Spanish) addressing workers' rights to reasonable accommodations, a good-faith interactive process, and protection from retaliation.

Additional information about the settlement and claims process will be available on [CRD's website](#). Simpluris, Inc. will administer distribution of the settlement fund.

Nelson Chan, Assistant Chief Counsel, and Eliana Mata, Staff Counsel, represented CRD.

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The CRD is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. The mission of the CRD is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the CRD's web site at calcivilrights@ca.gov.

