



Meeting Minutes: Governor's Committee on the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers

DATE: 02/05/2026

MINUTES PREPARED BY: CINTHIA MARTINEZ

Committee Members

Present

Elise Sporre, Project Manager and Outreach Coordinator, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services

Maureen Ramirez, Chief of Staff Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Rodolfo

Marc Majors, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Noemi Trevino, Migrant Education Specialist, Student Access and Opportunity, Minnesota Department of Education

Patrice Bailey, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Rodolfo Gutierrez, Executive Director, Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment Through Research

Guest

Adriana Campbell, Agricultural Outreach Representative, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Janie Sandoval, Agriculture Outreach Representative, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Lidibette Guzman, State Monitor Advocate, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Lorena Lindemann, Agricultural Outreach Representative, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Martha Castaneda, Agriculture Outreach Representative, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Staff Present: Cinthia Martinez, CareerForce Office Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Agenda

- Introduction/Welcome
- Approve Minutes
- Updates
- Public Comments
- Adjourn

Introduction/ Welcome

Approve Minutes

Edit name of guest present. Approved on February 10, 2026.

Updates

With ongoing concerns in Minnesota regarding ICE presence, Co-Chair Patrice Bailey asked members what agencies can do to help and invited participants to share any relevant information or concerns.

Co-Chair Marc Majors stated that DEED has been holding listening sessions with stakeholders to better understand what they are experiencing on the economic side. Some businesses have reduced operations or closed because employees are afraid to come to work. He noted that the level of fear in communities is affecting the state and will likely have a significant impact on the economy. DEED is using these listening sessions to determine how best to work with partners and respond to these challenges.

Committee member Elise raised concerns about the committee's lack of action over the past several years and expressed interest in discussing realistic expectations for the coming year. She noted that the committee has not had action plans since 2024, although the Housing Work Group had completed work prior to that. She also mentioned that the Governor will not be running again, which means the current executive order guiding the committee could end in less than a year. Elise emphasized the importance of developing a clear plan for what the committee will accomplish with the remaining time

Noemi Trevino asked whether Co-Chairs Patrice Bailey and Marc Majors could leverage their positions to help advance some of the committee's recommendations.

Co-Chair Patrice Bailey stated that he would raise these concerns during his legislative check-in scheduled for Friday, February 7, 2026.

Committee member Maureen noted that several recommendations made during the committee's early formation have since become law. She added that housing-related issues have been more challenging to address because they require coordination across multiple agencies.

A suggestion was made to develop a one-page summary outlining the committee's accomplishments to date, as well as items that have not yet been completed. This document will help guide discussion at the next meeting, where members can prioritize what they would like to achieve within the committee's remaining time.

Committee member Maureen volunteered to assist in preparing the one-page document.

Committee member Rodolfo recommended moving into an urgent response phase to address the growing fear and uncertainty among agricultural workers. HACER has received reports that some workers are not going to work due to safety concerns. Many are seeking assistance with basic needs such as food, clothing, and other essential resources. Additionally, some families are keeping their children out of school, and there is confusion about where to access support, including groceries. The committee may be able to play a role in supporting these communities.

A proposal was raised to consider advocating for a rental and housing moratorium in response to increased ICE presence in Minnesota. The ongoing fear and instability are preventing individuals from working and attending school, which may lead to a rise in homelessness—especially concerning given the continued inclement weather. The situation is expected to have cascading effects on employment, mental health, housing stability, education, and food security.

Farmers have expressed concern about labor shortages and their ability to fill essential roles. There is also uncertainty about how to ensure that incoming workers can safely travel to and work in Minnesota without risk of detention during critical agricultural periods such as harvest.

[Public Comments](#)

[Adjourn](#)