

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 2011

CONTACTS:

Marc Rodrigues, Student/Farmworker Alliance, +1 239-292-3431, marc@sfalliance.org
Elena Tchijov, CEO and Co-Founder of Leaping Bytes, +1 240-583-0290, elena@leapingbytes.com
Amanda Kloer, Director of Organizing, Change.org, +1 404-451-6580, amanda@change.org

PRESS RELEASE

CUSTOMERS THROW VIRTUAL TOMATOES AT FLORIDA-BASED PUBLIX OVER FARMWORKER EXPLOITATION

Consumers protest human rights abuses against farmworkers using first-ever anti-trafficking iPhone app to hurl virtual tomatoes at supermarkets.

IMMOKALEE, FL – Supermarket shoppers are using the world's first-ever anti-human trafficking iPhone app to throw virtual tomatoes at corporations accused of profiting from farmworker exploitation.

The app, Angry Tomato, is part of an ongoing series of [campaigns on Change.org](http://campaigns.onchange.org) asking Trader Joe's, Publix, Kroger, Giant, Stop & Shop, and other supermarket chains to participate in the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program, which would protect farmworkers from abuses such as modern-day slavery and raise wages a penny per pound of tomatoes picked. Nearly 35,000 people have already signed the [online petition campaign](http://online.petitioncampaign.com) targeting Publix.

"Angry Tomato users are making activist art by splattering virtual tomatoes and a request for change across the storefronts of grocery chains that are failing to stand up for farmworkers," said Marc Rodrigues of the Student Farmworker Alliance. "Then, they can share their posters with friends on Facebook and Twitter, sending a powerful message to supermarkets that its time to end farmworker exploitation now."

The Angry Tomato app and accompanying campaign are likely to increase pressure on the supermarket chains who have yet to commit to the Fair Food Program. In just a few weeks, the campaign has attracted tens of thousands of supporters and received coverage from CBS, The Boston Herald, and Grist.

"It has been exciting to develop an application that helps consumers fight for the basic human rights of farmworkers," said Andrei Tchijov, President and Co-Founder of Leaping Bytes. "Mobile technology has been under-utilized as a tool for activism, and Leaping Bytes has been happy to see this app put to use."

Angry Tomato is the first app developed by the Student/Farmworker Alliance for the purpose of promoting consumer advocacy on behalf of farmworkers.

"This is the first time we've seen customers using mobile and web app technology to achieve the goals of a campaign on Change.org," said Amanda Kloer, Director of Organizing for Change.org. "The Student/Farmworker Alliance's innovative use of emerging technologies for activism and organizing has been remarkable."

Live signature totals from Student/Farmworker Alliance's campaigns:

<http://www.change.org/petitions/tell-publix-to-sell-slave-free-tomatoes>
<http://www.change.org/petitions/ask-trader-joes-to-sell-slave-free-food>
<http://www.change.org/petitions/tell-krogerdillons-to-stop-slave-picked-produce-and-support-farm-workers-rights>
<http://www.change.org/petitions/tell-giant-and-stop-shop-to-stop-slave-picked-produce>

TO ACCESS MOBILE AND WEB VERSIONS OF APP:

Web Application: <http://angrytomato.leapingbytes.com/html/angrytomato.html>
iPhone Application: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/angry-tomato/id465185637?mt=8>

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers' response to public relations statements by supermarkets:

Publix: http://www.ciw-online.org/put_it_in_the_price.html

Trader Joe's: http://www.ciw-online.org/TJ_point_by_point.html
Ahold USA: http://www.ciw-online.org/ciw_response_to_ahold.html

Journalists interested in contacting public relations staff for supermarkets targeted in the app should try:

Publix
Maria Brous, Director of Media & Community Relations
+1 863-688-1188 ext. 55339
maria.brous@publix.com

Trader Joe's
Allison Mochizuki, Media Relations
amochizuki@traderjoes.com

Ahold USA (Giant and Stop and Shop)
Tracy Pawelski, VP External Communications and Community Relations
+1 717-240-1513
tracy.pawelski@aholdusa.com

For more information on Student/Farmworker Alliance, please visit:

<http://www.sfalliance.org/>
Student/Farmworker Alliance (SFA) is a national network of students and youth organizing with farmworkers to eliminate sweatshop conditions and modern-day slavery in the fields. We work in alliance with the [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#) (CIW), a Florida-based, membership-led organization of mostly Latino, Haitian, and Mayan Indian low-wage workers. We understand our work – which formally [began in 2000](#) – as part of larger movements for economic and social justice.

For more information on Leaping Bytes, LLC please visit:

<http://www.leapingbytes.com/about>
Leaping Bytes is a technology solutions company specializing in mobile, web, and custom software development. We eagerly engage with the progressive nonprofit, advocacy and political community in order to jointly develop projects that ultimately create a greater good.

For more information on [Change.org](#), please visit:

<http://www.change.org/about>
[Change.org](#) is the world's fastest-growing platform for social change — growing by more than 400,000 new members a month, and empowering millions of people to start, join, and win campaigns for social change in their community, city and country.

###