

Proposed bill would benefit migrant workers

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Tuesday, 12 June 2007 19:32

A new law that has the support of farm and labor groups would guarantee migrant farm workers a mattress at labor camps in North Carolina.

Under the proposed legislation, inspectors would check conditions at problem camps more frequently. Under the current standards, some camps allow 15 farm workers to share a toilet or an outhouse. Some labor camps have no transportation. Others offer cardboard instead of mattresses. The proposed bill passed in the Senate and awaits discussion in the House.

Not all current conditions are bad. In Ashe County, Ron Hudler's Christmas tree farm has no trouble finding workers. He provides a living space for about 80 workers a year and has telephones, cable television, freezers and washers and dryers at his camps. He would be in favor of the proposed legislation.

The state currently has approximately 1,300 registered labor camps.