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Local Indian-Sikh farmers thank Seattle City Council for supporting protesting farmers in India, ask for help against threats here

Farmers in Whatcom County, like farmers in India, face devastating government actions proposed without their input

(BELLINGHAM, Wash.) A leader in a growing community of Indian-Sikh farmers in northwest Washington is reaching out to thank Seattle city leaders for their resolution supporting farmers in India and others around the globe protesting devastating actions by the Indian government.

The local community of family farms is also asking for help against serious threats they are facing right here in Washington state.

“Our community is deeply concerned by the devastating actions the Indian government has taken,” wrote Paul Sangha, in a letter sent today to the Seattle City Council.

The council last month passed a resolution in support of farmers irreparably harmed by the Indian government’s unilateral actions drastically affecting farming markets in that country without farmers’ input.

Speaking on behalf of Indian family farmers, as well as the non-Indian farming community, Sangha says the local community fears for the future of its families’ farms and all family farms. The group is deeply concerned because of a troubling plan by state government leaders to force all water users in one of western Washington’s few remaining farming areas into court in a contentious, divisive multi-decade process called adjudication.

“The process will quickly lead to the loss and development of much of our area’s fertile farmland,” Sangha said. “Without a water storage reservoir, the Nooksack River Basin is in a very different situation than other areas to solve water issues, and without community collaboration, the court battle the state is preparing to start will devastate local farming.”

Sangha, whose family grows blueberries and raspberries in Whatcom County’s Nooksack River Basin, is the son of immigrants from Punjab, the Indian region at the center of recent protests. He serves as one of the leaders of local farming advocacy non-profit Whatcom Family Farmers.

“We want to see our entire community come together to find lasting solutions that help everyone,” said Sangha. “What the state wants would divide neighbor against neighbor, would delay crucial salmon recovery work that our local farmers have already been helping with, and would hit small family farms the hardest, likely pushing many of them out of business and forcing them to sell to developers.”

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