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My name is Cesario Aguirre. I've worked at Blue Diamond Growers for 28 years. For the last 10 years I've been a maintenance mechanic.

Even before the organizing started, I had talked with several people about the union. I thought the employees needed a union because we were not being treated with respect. I knew several people who worked for Blue Diamond for many years, people I knew to be hardworking individuals, who got dismissed on small technicalities. It was very unjust.

Over 28 years I've made a lot of friends in the hourly workforce as well as in management. Some of the management employees reacted negatively when they found out I had attended union organizing meetings. I was interrogated about my inclinations as to why I wanted Blue Diamond to have a union. I told them we needed to be treated with more respect and we needed to be heard. From there on the attitude of some individuals in management just went downhill. It got really stressful. It still is.

Blue Diamond started with all the anti-union flyers and we couldn't say anything. We couldn't talk to the employees about why organizing to have a union because the company was threatening us. Some of the members of the organizing committee were told that if they were seen talking to people in groups of three or more they would be disciplined.

Several times Blue Diamond has mentioned the possibility of moving the plant. That was one of the threats they used, that they could just pick up and leave and we would be jeopardizing not only our jobs but those of all the other people who work there. I've been told by several employees in the plant they feel very much we need the union but they are afraid of opening up and making it known because they are intimidated by this threat the company made. They don't want to jeopardize their jobs, their livelihood.

When Ivo and Mike got fired, it made it worse on those people who knew them, especially those who worked around them in manufacturing and on the main production line. Ivo was very outspoken for the union and it seemed his dismissal was a way to send a message to those who were for the union. It was a strong intimidating statement.

As soon as the company heard about the National Labor Relations Board Decision, they came out with a memo saying they did nothing wrong. That minimized the validity of the decision. To this day they don't admit to doing anything wrong, even though they aren't going to appeal.

They only announced the decision not to appeal in two departments. They had meetings with manufacturing and the main line. My sister works in manufacturing. She said the supervisor said, "I have no time to answer questions. Blue Diamond still admits no wrong but it would be a waste of time and money to appeal." This says to me everything is still business as usual. The atmosphere is so gloomy, it's really weighing on people, even people who signed the letter saying they were on the organizing committee. It's been 14 months for me and longer for some of the others.

I'm very glad of the outcome of the hearing. We're making progress in a good direction. Since we got the NLRB decision, the comments are a lot more positive, but people are still looking over their shoulders.