UFW Boycott Gains Support of Bishops
WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Roman Catholic bishops on Friday backed a consumer boycott in support of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and threatened their collective weight behind a particular tactic in the next meeting of their union.

It was the first time they had demanded support from the AFL-CIO for free union elections among farm hands.

The bishops called for a nationwide boycott of table grapes and head lettuce until elections are held for farm hands to determine which, if any union, they want to represent them.

The action, approved without an audible dissenting voice, came on the closing day of the week-long annual meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Please complete and return this pledge to the United Farm Workers:

17 Belmont Street
Hamden, CT 06517
203-4905

1915 Park Street
Hartford, CT 06106
233-7234

To America’s Farm Workers,
I support your non-violent struggle for justice.

I will not eat table grapes or iceberg lettuce unless I see the Aztec eagle on the wrapper.

I will contact a film or speaker at the next meeting of my church, union, class or organization.

I will enclose a donation.

Name
Phone
Address
City

U.S. Bishops Set Support For Boycott

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contracts not in the workers’ best interests.

President George Meany of the AFL-CIO said the Teamsters of renege on a farm labor agreement with California’s largest contract growers.

Mr. Chavez threatened a boycott of California agricultural products.

Meany said the Teamsters would “take whatever actions are appropriate” to support Chavez’s union, including consideration of a nationwide boycott. A spokesman said grapes, lettuce and other row crops would be involved.

Fitzsimmons Hit

Meany denounced President Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters, who has denied that his union had an agreement with the AFL-CIO to leave organizing of California farm laborers to the Chavez union.

The boycott approved by the bishops was proposed by Bishop Joseph F. Dornelly, an auxiliary bishop of Hartford, Conn., who said “the very existence of the United Farm Workers is at stake in this struggle.”

He added that Chavez’s union offers the best hope of protecting the “legitimate rights of one of the most disadvantaged groups of workers in the American economy.”

Although Chavez’s union won contracts with growers in California’s Coachella Valley in 1970, the Teamsters Union obtained agreements with growers the next year, bringing a prolonged strike by Chavez’s supporters.

Despite several temporary lulls in the fight, including recently aborted jurisdictional talks, the Teamsters Union a few weeks ago denounced them to continue contracts with most major growers.

National Boycott

Archbishop Francis J. Fury of San Antonio, Tex., said the only weapon left to Chavez’s union is a national consumer boycott of grapes and head lettuce.

He added that beyond the bishops taking their stand, “We’ve got to do something about it when we get home.”

He added they would face opposition from various interests, including supermarkets.

Various Catholic agencies, including a farm workers committee backed by Bishop Dornelly, have backed Chavez but had not previously been done by the entire body of American bishops.

“Every other method had been tried and the bishops felt there was no other option open.”

Groups To Picket At Finast Store

Two groups representing farm workers said Friday they plan to picket a Finast food store in West Hartford next week.

The United Farm Workers of America and the Committee of Connecticut Religious Leaders for Farm Workers said they would conduct a “protest vigil” Tuesday at 4 p.m. at the Finast store at 27 S. Main St.

The groups said they are protesting the sale of non-United Farm Workers picked grapes and lettuce.