BrightEdge Creative

September 21, 2025

Ms. Trina Walters
Vice President, Brand Strategy
South Grove Coffee

Subject: Immediate pause and ethical transition plan regarding Sierra del Norte

Dear Ms. Walters,

I'm writing about the August 29 report naming Sierra del Norte—a primary South Grove supplier—as relying on child labor in its coffee harvests. This is not theoretical. Children are being exploited while this supplier relationship continues. We take that fact seriously.

BrightEdge has a clear policy: we do not produce or distribute marketing that promotes supply chains tied to exploitative labor. Continuing with the current *Local Stories, Local Beans* campaign—especially claims like "Ethically Grounded" and "Brewed with Integrity"—would misrepresent the present reality and expose both our companies to ethical and reputational harm. To protect our partnership and act in line with our values, we are **pausing all campaign activity that references ethical sourcing**, effective immediately.

This pause is a step toward action, not away from it. South Grove has already signaled intent to transition; we want to help turn that intent into a credible plan and communicate it openly. If you agree, we propose the following near-term sequence that keeps urgency high and momentum positive:

1) Align and secure guardrails (within 48 hours—by Tuesday, September 23)

- Hold a 45-minute working session (you, your sourcing lead, and BrightEdge: Tara Liu and me).
- Confirm immediate guardrails across channels: halt paid/owned assets that imply ethical sourcing; remove or revise affected copy on web, social, and point-of-sale; update press/FAQ language to avoid claims we cannot substantiate today.

2) Public commitment and accountability (within 10 days—by Sunday, September 28)

- Publish a short update acknowledging the Sierra del Norte issue, stating that South Grove has **stopped placing new purchase orders** with that exporter, and outlining the transition plan at a high level.
- Announce your **target timeline** to complete the supplier transition and your intention to **engage an independent auditor** for verification. Transparency here sets the standard and makes backtracking unlikely.

3) Pivot campaign deliverables (initial drop within 2 weeks—by Sunday, October 5)

- **Transparency Track:** A concise landing page and social series titled *"From Commitment to Change"* that reports progress (milestones, dates, auditor engagement) and answers customer questions plainly.
- **Supply Chain Storytelling:** Replace abstract claims with real profiles of farmers and cooperatives that meet your standard, making people—not slogans—the center of the story.
- **Ongoing Updates:** A monthly, time-stamped progress note (owned channels first; earned media when milestones hit) until the transition is complete.

4) Industry leadership moves (optional but recommended; scope with you)

- Invite peer review or publishable auditor summaries once available.
- Consider a limited **price-guarantee or long-term contract** model with compliant producers to reward ethical practices.
- Host a small roundtable with local cafés and advocates to discuss building a regional "ethical coffee corridor." Turning crisis into convening power is how leaders lead.

We will re-scope our deliverables to support this pivot and minimize rework. Where possible, we'll adapt existing creative to the transparency narrative and supply-chain stories rather than start from scratch. We will also provide a revised schedule and budget for your approval that reflects the paused assets and the proposed replacements.

Please confirm by **Friday, September 26** whether South Grove approves the immediate pause and the alignment session proposed above. If that date is difficult, a brief note with your earliest feasible alternatives will help us keep protections in place without delay.

We value South Grove, and we want to stand with you in doing the right thing, right now. This is an opportunity to move beyond perception and into practice—protecting both brands today while setting a higher bar for our industry tomorrow. BrightEdge is ready to help you make that real.

With respect,

[Your Name]
Project Coordinator
BrightEdge Creative

cc: Tara Liu, Account Manager