



SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

2101 E. Earhart Avenue, Suite 100, Stockton, CA 95206

MINUTES

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, February 12, 2024

Present: Kamaljit Bagri, Jose Chavez, Josh Cheney, Steven J. Ding, Brent Holtz, Richard Marchini, Joseph Nicolini, Robert Rickman, Ken Vogel

Absent: George Biagi, Michael W. Fisher, Andrew Genasci, Chuck Hammond, Scott Johnson, Terry Ann Paoletti, Joseph Seimas, Roseanna Silva, Jeff Torres, Terry Violet

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- I. Call to Order** – Chair Ken Vogel called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.
- II. Approval of Minutes** –October 9, 2023, minutes not approved due to lack of quorum.
- III. Correspondence** – Advisory Board member has not submitted required application despite overdue appointment. Board of Supervisors may appoint an alternate if this continues to go unresolved.
- IV. Old Business**
- a. **Delta Issues:**
 - i. Tunnel project faces financial/political hurdles; focus shifted to levee maintenance and funding.
 - ii. Environmental Impact Report approved, despite opposition, pressure on the Department of Water Resources to appeal.
 - iii. Los Angeles water infrastructure and Colorado River Agreement concerns discussed.
- V. Legislative Updates**
- a. **New Regulations**
 - i. AB 1864 (Connolly Bill):
 - 1. Stricter pesticide restrictions near schools (including private schools).
 - 2. Annual notifications required; no spraying 6 AM–6 PM.
 - 3. Schools rarely check notifications; state pushing for tighter rules.
 - 4. School reached out for a pesticide use complaint, however the farmer was from a neighboring county.
 - ii. Enforcement Changes
 - 1. Higher end of fine range increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000; fine will be given per violation. An example: a home nearby complains of

having headaches and having hard time breathing, this would equate to a higher end fine. Workers get pesticides on them; this equates to a separate fine.

2. Discretion for Agriculture Commissioners may be eliminated, fixed penalty matrix.
- iii. Neonicotinoid Regulations: Restrictions challenge growers; potential local emergency exemptions.
- iv. Burning Ban:
 1. Complete ban on farms <250 acres, >250 acres was already banned as of January 1st, 2024.
 2. Biochar machines (e.g., Caribou Biofuels) explored as an alternative.
 - a. Mobile units may pay growers for biochar (fertilizer byproduct).
- v. Mill Tax Increase: Pesticide prices rise over 3 years; revenue funds DPR, local agencies.
- b. **Property Tax/Assessments/Crop Removal**
 - i. Property Tax/Assessments: Meeting with Assessor Steve J. Bestolarides to address the tax impacts of removed permanent crops. (e.g. grapes, walnuts).
 - ii. Crop Removal
 1. 75,000 acres of walnuts to be removed to bring the price of walnuts in compliance with supply.
 2. 15,000 acres of vineyards to be removed.
 3. Lots of Bing Cherry trees to be removed, unknown estimated acreage.
- c. **Energy Concerns**
 - i. PG&E to implement rate hikes.
 - ii. More solar to curb costs on energy consumption.

VI. New Business

- a. **Agricultural Commissioner's Report**
 - i. Abandoned Orchards: Harbor pests (e.g., naval orange worms); legal process ongoing for 40-acre cherry orchard case.
 - ii. Staffing Shortages: Retention issues for agriculture biologists; HR reviewing salary adjustments.
- b. **Motion to Hold Quarterly Committee Meetings:** Consensus to do quarterly meetings.

VII. Announcements – None

VIII. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM, next meeting date set for April 9, 2024