



AGENDA

California Avocado Commission Executive Committee Meeting

Meeting Information

Date: July 8, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: Hybrid Meeting

Physical Meeting Location:
United Water Conservation District
1701 N. Lombard St., Suite 200
Oxnard, CA 93030

Web/Teleconference URL:

<https://californiaavocado.zoom.us/j/84113353832?pwd=LonCbUPzwLJPr2DSmjsG2mNPfzUqrn.1>

Conference Call Number: (669) 900-6833

Meeting ID: 841 1335 3832

Passcode: 755962

Meeting materials will be posted online at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at:

<https://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/industry-calendar>

Committee Member Attendance

As of Monday, July 7, 2025, the following Committee members have advised the Commisison they will participate in this meeting:

Victor Araiza

Jason Cole

Maureen Cottingham

Ohannes Karaoghlanian

Time	Item
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1:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

a. Roll Call/Quorum

2. Opportunity for Public Comment

Any person may address the Committee at this time on any subject within the jurisdiction of the California Avocado Commission.

Time	Item
	3. Consent Calendar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes of December 17, 2024
	4. Marketing Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Marketing Committee Future
	5. Industry Affairs and Operations Update
	6. Closed Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Closed session regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of an employee pursuant to California Government Code Section 11126(a)(1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Committee may go into closed session to discuss and make recommendations regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee. b. Closed session regarding pending and/or ongoing litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(e).
	7. Return to open session and announce action taken in closed session, if any.
3:00 p.m.	8. Adjourn Meeting

Disclosures

The times listed for each agenda item are estimated and subject to change. It is possible that some of the agenda items may not be able to be discussed prior to adjournment. Consequently, those items will be rescheduled to appear on a subsequent agenda. All meetings of the California Avocado Commission are open to the public and subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

All agenda items are subject to discussion and possible action. For more information, or to make a request regarding a disability-related modification or accommodation for the meeting, please contact April Aymami at 949-341-1955, California Avocado Commission, 12 Mauchly, Suite L, Irvine, CA 92618, or via email at aaymami@avocado.org. Requests for disability-related modification or accommodation for the meeting should be made at least 48 hours prior to the meeting time. For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, audiocassette or computer disk. This meeting schedule notice and agenda is available on the internet at <https://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/meeting-agendas-minutes> and <http://it.cdffa.ca.gov/igov/postings/detail.aspx?type=Notices>.

If you have questions on the above agenda, please contact April Aymami at aaymami@avocado.org or 949-341-1955.

Summary Definition of Conflict of Interest

It is each member's and alternate's responsibility to determine whether they have a conflict of interest and whether they should excuse themselves from a particular discussion or vote during a meeting. To assist you in this evaluation, the following *Summary Definition of Conflict of Interest* may be helpful.

A Commission *member or employee* has a conflict of interest in a decision of the Commission if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material effect, financial or otherwise, on the member or employee or a member of his or her immediate family that is distinguishable from its effect on all persons subject to the Commission's jurisdiction.

No Commission member or employee shall make, or participate in making, any decision in which he or she knows or should know he or she has a conflict of interest.

No Commission member or employee shall, in any way, use his or her position to influence any decision in which he or she knows or should know he or she has a conflict of interest.

**CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
December 17, 2024**

A meeting of the California Avocado Commission (CAC) Executive Committee was held on December 17, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. with the following people present:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Victor Araiza
Jason Cole
Maureen Cottingham
Ohannes Karaoghlanian
Rachael Laenen

STAFF PRESENT

April Aymami
Ken Melban
Terry Splane

GUESTS PRESENT

John Berns
Rob Grether

OFFICIALLY PRESENT

Ben Kardokus, *CDFA*
Katie Schoettler, *Foley & Lardner LLP*
George Soares, *Kahn, Soares & Conway*

Item #1 Call to Order

Roll Call/Quorum – Item 1.a.

Jason Cole, CAC Executive Committee chairman, called the meeting to order 9:00 a.m. and established a quorum.

Item #2 Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item #3 Consent Calendar

Consider approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes of November 5, 2024 - Item 3.a

Mr. Cole introduced the consent calendar items and asked for questions or comments. With no comments on the consent calendar items, the following motion was put forward:

Motion:

The Executive Committee approves the Consent Calendar, Item 3.a, as presented.

(Cottingham/Karaoghlanian) MSC Unanimous

MOTION 24-12-17-1

The Consent Calendar is included in the December 2024 Executive Committee Packet and is attached to the permanent copy of these Minutes and identified as EXHIBIT A, Item 3.a.

Item #4 Report on Policy Task Force Meeting

Rachael Laenen provided an introduction to Foley & Lardner LLP, a lobbying firm retained by the Commission in November in an effort to ensure family farms were included in wildfire tax relief legislation. Ms. Laenen indicated the initial term of the Foley agreement was coming to an end, and a full proposal was being presented by Katie Schoettler for Committee consideration.

Consider Proposal from Foley & Lardner LLP regarding Wildfire Tax Relief – Item 4.a

Ms. Schoettler gave an overview of her personal background, and that of Foley & Lardner LLP. She reported that the wildfire relief bill had already passed with existing language that included single member limited liability corporations but did not include S corporations. Ms. Schoettler stated that the bill that was passed was only temporary and that Foley's proposal was to work to get all small family farms included in revised language through reconciliation.

There was in-depth discussion regarding the process and timing of reconciliation, as well as why the language wasn't successful in getting changed prior to the passage of the bill, and if there was an opportunity to write language that was permanent and covered all future disasters. A point was made that this wildfire tax relief language impacts significantly more organizations than just avocados in

Ventura County and that it may be beneficial to build a coalition to further explore the issue. Ken Melban, CAC vice president of industry affairs and operations, and George Soares, CAC legal counsel, indicated that they would like to seek clarity on what was said by the Joint Committee on Taxation regarding the bill, as well as speak to Congressman Doug LaMalfa to better understand why the bill did not address small family farms. At the conclusion of discussion, the Committee decided it was best to take a pause to evaluate the best approach before moving forward on this issue. The Committee directed staff to gather additional information and bring back to the Policy Task Force to develop a plan.

The Foley & Lardner LLP proposal is included in the December 2024 Executive Committee Packet and is attached to the permanent copy of these Minutes and identified as EXHIBIT A, Item 4.a.

Consider Proposal to Retain Ballard Partners, Inc. – Item 4.b

Ms. Laenen reported that Ballard Partners had presented their proposal to the Policy Task Force, and while an annual contract, totaling \$300,000, was a significant commitment, the Task Force felt the current risk to the industry was so great that the Commission needed to fight with all they had.

Mr. Melban stated that while there were no guarantees, Ballard Partners was optimistic that CAC could see success in getting inspections in Mexico reverted back to the previous procedures and that importation of avocados from Guatemala could be paused until the Commission had additional pest data from Dr. Hoddle's research. He noted that while CAC had not historically engaged lobbyist such as this, the Commission previously had contracts with subject matter experts on water issues with a similar annual budget.

Motion:

The Executive Committee recommends engaging Ballard Partners, Inc. as the Commission's lobbying firm.

(Cottingham/Karaoghlanian) MSC Unanimous

MOTION 24-12-17-2

The Ballard Partners, Inc. proposal is included in the December 2024 Executive Committee Packet and is attached to the permanent copy of these Minutes and identified as EXHIBIT A, Item 4.b.

Item #5 Review of Public Member Candidates for Term Ending October 31, 2026

The Committee reviewed the public member selection process information and resumes submitted by public member applicants. It was noted that all but two, Marty Ordman and Maddie Cook, had a financial interest in the avocado industry and therefore were not qualified to serve as CAC's public member. The Committee asked staff to contact Mr. Ordman and confirm that he did not have any current or potential financial interests in the avocado industry. Ms. Cook and Mr. Ordman (pending his response regarding avocado interests) would be brought to the CAC Board for consideration as public members.

The Public Member Information and Resume Submissions are included in the December 2024 Executive Committee Packet and is attached to the permanent copy of these Minutes and identified as EXHIBIT A, Item 5.

Item #6 Commission office lease discussion

Mr. Melban provided an update on the additional research requested by the Executive Committee at their October meeting regarding the utilization of the physical Commission office. He reported that staff had discussed and were confident that temporary meeting space rentals would fulfill any needs that may arise in conducting normal CAC business. It was noted that management would bring this item to the full Board in February for a final decision on whether or not to maintain a physical office location to provide sufficient time to clear out the furniture, equipment, inventory and physical records at the Irvine office.

Item #7 Closed Session

Closed session regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of an employee pursuant to California Government Code Section 11126(a)(1) – Item 7.a

The Committee may go into closed session to discuss and make recommendations regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee – Item 7.a.i

Mr. Cole convened a Closed Session of the Executive Committee members to discuss Item #7.a with members of the Executive Committee, John Berns, Rob Grether, Ken Melban, Terry Splane, George Soares and Ben Kardokus at 10:43 a.m.

Mr. Cole dismissed Mr. Melban and Mr. Splane from Closed Session at 10:54 a.m.

Item # 8 Return to open session and announce action taken in closed session, if any

Mr. Cole reconvened Open Session at 11:10 a.m. and reported that the Committee had taken action on a personnel matter during Closed Session.

ADJOURN MEETING

Mr. Cole adjourned the meeting at 11:11a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

April Aymami, CAC Director of Industry Affairs and Operations

I certify that the above is a true statement of the minutes of the December 17, 2024, CAC Executive Committee, approved by the CAC Executive Committee on July 8, 2025.

Victor Araiza, CAC Board Secretary

EXHIBITS ATTACHED TO THE PERMANENT COPY OF THESE MINUTES

Exhibit A	December 17, 2024 Executive Committee Packet
Exhibit B	December 17, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting AB 2720 Roll Call Vote Tally Summary

CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION

AB 2720 Roll Call Vote Tally Summary

To be attached to the Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name: <i>Executive Committee Meeting</i>	Meeting Location: <i>Hybrid – In-Person (Oxnard) Online (Zoom)</i>	Meeting Date: <i>December 17, 2024</i>
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<i>Attendees Who Voted</i>	<i><u>MOTION</u></i> <i><u>24-12-17-1</u></i>	<i><u>MOTION</u></i> <i><u>24-12-17-2</u></i>
Victor Araiza	Yea	Yea
Jason Cole	Did not vote	Yea
Maureen Cottingham	Yea	Yea
Ohannes Karaoghlanian	Yea	Yea
Rachael Laenen	Yea	Yea
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Unanimous</i>	<i>Unanimous</i>