



# AGENDA

## California Avocado Commission Executive Committee Meeting

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### Meeting Information

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**Date: October 8, 2025**

**Time: 3:00 p.m.**

**Location: Hybrid Meeting**

**Physical Meeting Location:**

**Hilton Garden Inn Irvine/Orange County**

**2381 Morse Ave.**

**Irvine, CA 92614**

**Web/Teleconference URL:**

<https://californiaavocado.zoom.us/j/84060644356?pwd=421xLze8y7yHzd6QAQsrcdlWgxrxzxC.1>

**Conference Call Number: (669) 900-6833**

**Meeting ID: 840 6064 4356**

**Passcode: 347788**

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

<https://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/meeting-agendas-minutes>

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### Committee Member Attendance

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**As of Tuesday, October 7, 2025, the following Committee members have advised the Commission they will participate in this meeting:**

**Victor Araiza**

**Jason Cole**

**Maureen Cottingham**

**Ohannes Karaoghlanian**

**Rachael Laenen**

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<b>Time</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>1. Call to Order</b>
	a. Roll Call/Quorum

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Time	Item
	<p><b>2. Opportunity for Public Comment</b> Any person may address the Board at this time on any subject within the jurisdiction of the California Avocado Commission.</p> <p><b>3. Consent Calendar</b></p> <p>a. Consider approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes of July 8, 2025</p> <p><b>4. Closed session regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of an employee pursuant to California Government Code Section 11126(a)(1)</b></p> <p>a. The Committee may go into closed session to discuss and make recommendations regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee.</p> <p>i. President’s Performance Reviews pursuant to Section 11126(a)(1) of the California Government Code.</p> <p>b. Closed session regarding pending and/or ongoing litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(e).</p> <p><b>5. Return to open session and announce action taken in closed session, if any.</b></p>
4:00 p.m.	<b>6. Adjourn Meeting</b>

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## Disclosures

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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](mailto: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.cdfa.ca.gov/igov/postings/detail.aspx?type=Notices>.

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

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## Summary Definition of Conflict of Interest

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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  
July 8, 2025**

A meeting of the California Avocado Commission (CAC) Executive Committee was held on July 8, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. with the following people present:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Victor Araiza  
Jason Cole  
Maureen Cottingham  
Ohannes Karaoghlanian  
Rachael Laenen

**STAFF PRESENT**

April Aymami  
Zac Benedict  
Ken Melban  
Terry Splane

**OFFICIALLY PRESENT**

Vickie Carpenter, *USDA*  
Ben Kardokus, *CDFA*  
George Soares, *Kahn, Soares & Conway*  
George Webster, *USDA*

**GUESTS PRESENT**

John Berns  
Joanne Robles-Swanson

**Item #1 Call to Order**

**Roll Call/Quorum – Item 1.a.**

Jason Cole, CAC Executive Committee chairman, called the meeting to order 1:00 p.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 December 17, 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.***

***(Karaoghlanian/Cottingham) MSC Unanimous***

**MOTION 25-7-8-1**

The Consent Calendar is included in the July 2025 Executive Committee Packet and is attached to the permanent copy of these Minutes and identified as EXHIBIT A, Item 3.a.

**Item #4 Marketing Update**

**Marketing Committee Future - Item 4.a**

Mr. Cole provided an overview of the history of the Marketing Committee, noting that feedback from Marketing Committee members was that the current structure, as defined in the CAC Bylaws, was not adding value for members or the Commission. He stated that changes to the Marketing Committee composition and purpose in the Bylaws could be changed by a two-third vote of the Board.

Discussion regarding the current Marketing Committee responsibilities indicated that there was no longer value in convening a Marketing Committee meeting to provide marketing activity updates and to discuss crop volume and timing, as CAC management was regularly engaging directly with handlers for these updates. There was support for the Marketing Committee to be an oversight committee to review CAC management's proposed programs and budgets, prior to the Board's approval. Mr. Cole stated that the Board would continue this discussion at its next meeting in August.

**Marketing Update – Item 4**

Terry Splane, CAC vice president of marketing, provided an update on regional activations, including morning news PR coverage. He also reported that in preparation for the CAC office closure, all

promotional items were moving to an offsite fulfillment center, which would be completed in the next three to four weeks.

Lastly, Mr. Splane announced the co-branding partnership between CAC and Walmart, with the commitment of 50,000 bags displaying California Avocado branded imagery on one side and Walmart branding on the other. Ken Melban, CAC president, stated that CAC would review sales data before and during this promotion, and depending on results, could help encourage handlers to use a unified California Avocado branded bag.

#### **Item #5 Industry Affairs and Operations Update**

April Aymami, CAC director of industry affairs and operations, provided an update on the bank transition from BMO to Western Alliance Bank, noting that the majority of funds had been transferred, with just restricted funds remaining at BMO until the collateralized account setup with WAB was finalized. She also gave a brief update on the remaining crop volume to be harvested and reminded the Committee of the upcoming CAC election.

Mr. Melban reported CAC joined a letter in support of the Petition filed with the State Water Board by Farm Bureau of Ventura County, California Farm Bureau Federation, Ventura County Agricultural Association, Western Growers Association, et al. The Petition is challenging certain provisions of the Los Angeles Regional Water Board's new requirements on irrigated agriculture lands in Ventura County. He also stated that CAC was hosting a grove tour with USDA Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Connie Conway, and that District 3 & 4 Board members would be invited to participate. Lastly, Mr. Melban provided an update on the USDA inspection issue, reporting that CAC was getting traction, but nothing had been finalized.

#### **Item #6 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 6.a

The Committee may go into closed session to discuss and make recommendations regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee – Item 6.a.i

Closed session regarding pending and/or ongoing litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(e) – Item 6.b

Mr. Cole convened a Closed Session of the Executive Committee members to discuss Items #6.a and 6.b with members of the Executive Committee, George Soares and Ben Kardokus at 1:56 p.m. Mr. Melban joined the Closed Session at 2:14 pm.

#### **Item # 7 Return to open session and announce action taken in closed session, if any**

Mr. Cole reconvened Open Session at 3:13 p.m. and reported the following:

- Item 6.a – The Committee took action regarding the President's compensation package
- Item 6.b – The Committee took no action

#### **ADJOURN MEETING**

Mr. Cole adjourned the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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April Aymami, CAC Director of Industry Affairs and Operations

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

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Victor Araiza, CAC Board Secretary

**EXHIBITS ATTACHED TO THE PERMANENT COPY OF THESE MINUTES**

Exhibit A      July 8, 2025 Executive Committee Packet  
Exhibit B      July 8, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting AB 2720 Roll Call Vote Tally Summary

**CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION**

**Exhibit B**

**AB 2720 Roll Call Vote Tally Summary**  
*To be attached to the Meeting Minutes*

<b>Meeting Name:</b> <i>Executive Committee Meeting</i>	<b>Meeting Location:</b> <i>Hybrid – In-Person (Oxnard) Online (Zoom)</i>	<b>Meeting Date:</b> <i>July 8, 2025</i>
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<b><i>Attendees Who Voted</i></b>	<b><i><u>MOTION</u> 25-7-8-1</i></b>
Victor Araiza	Yea
Jason Cole	Did not vote
Maureen Cottingham	Yea
Ohannes Karaoghlanian	Yea
Rachael Laenen	Yea
<b><i>Outcome</i></b>	<b><i>Unanimous</i></b>