



AGENDA

California Avocado Commission
Executive Committee Meeting

Meeting Information

Date: December 17, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.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/83402302423?pwd=6xnbf3ZVCsdZDf2iOTW3iINfIKD0vw.1>

Conference Call Number: (669) 900-6833

Meeting ID: 834 0230 2423

Passcode: 206668

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 Friday, December 13, 2024, the following Committee members have advised the Commission they will participate in this meeting:

Victor Araiza

Jason Cole

Maureen Cottingham

Ohannes Karaoghlanian

Time	Item
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9:00 a.m.	1. Call to Order a. Roll Call/Quorum
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Time	Item
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>3. Consent Calendar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes of November 5, 2024
	<p>4. Report on Policy Task Force Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider Proposal from Foley & Lardner LLP regarding Wildfire Tax Relief b. Consider Proposal to Retain Ballard Partners, Inc.
	<p>5. Review of Public Member Candidates for Term Ending October 31, 2026</p>
	<p>6. Commission office lease discussion</p>
	<p>7. Closed Session</p> <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.
	<p>8. Return to open session and announce action taken in closed session, if any.</p>
11:00 a.m.	<p>9. Adjourn Meeting</p>

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.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 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.



COMMITTEE ACTION

ITEM 3.a: **Consider approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes of November 5, 2024**

SUMMARY:

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of November 5, 2024 are attached for the Committee's review and approval.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

- Not applicable

COMMITTEE OPTIONS:

- Approve minutes as presented
- Amend minutes
- Take no action

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve minutes as presented

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS:

- Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of November 5, 2024

**CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 5, 2024**

A meeting of the California Avocado Commission (CAC) Executive Committee was held on November 5, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. with the following people present:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jason Cole
Maureen Cottingham
Robert Grether
Rachael Laenen
Daryn Miller

STAFF PRESENT

April Aymami
Ken Melban
Terry Splane

GUESTS PRESENT

Robert Jackson

OFFICIALLY PRESENT

Ben Kardokus, *CDFA*
Ed Ruckert, *Law Offices of Edward M Ruckert*
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 10:02 a.m. and established a quorum.

Introductions – Item 1.b.

April Aymami, CAC director of industry affairs and operations, announced the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) representatives, CAC legal counsel, CAC staff and known guests participating in the meeting.

Item # 2 Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item # 3 Consent Calendar

Consider approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes of October 9, 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/Grether) MSC Unanimous

MOTION 24-11-5-1

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

Item # 4 Closed Session

Item # 4.b Closed session regarding pending and/or ongoing litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 11126(e).

Mr. Cole convened a Closed Session of the Executive Committee members, Ken Melban, Terry Splane, George Soares, Ed Ruckert, Robert Jackson and Ben Kardokus at 10:05 a.m. Item #4.b under closed session adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Item # 4.a Closed session regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of an employee pursuant to California Government Code Section 11126(a)(1)

The Committee may go into closed session to discuss and make recommendations regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee – Item 4.a.i

California Avocado Commission
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2024

Vice President's Performance Reviews pursuant to Section 11126(a)(1) of the California Government Code – Item 4.a.ii

Mr. Cole continued Closed Session of the Executive Committee members to discuss Item #4.a with members of the Executive Committee, Ken Melban, Terry Splane George Soares and Ben Kardokus at 11:35 a.m.

Item # 5 Return to open session and announce action taken in closed session, if any

Mr. Cole reconvened Open Session at 12:40 p.m. and reported that no action was taken in Closed Session.

ADJOURN MEETING

Mr. Cole adjourned the meeting at 12:43 p.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 November 5, 2024, CAC Executive Committee, approved by the CAC Executive Committee on December 17, 2024.

Victor Araiza, CAC Board Secretary

EXHIBITS ATTACHED TO THE PERMANENT COPY OF THESE MINUTES

Exhibit A November 5, 2024 Executive Committee Packet

Exhibit B November 5, 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 (Ventura) Online (Zoom)</i>	Meeting Date: <i>November 5, 2024</i>
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<i>Attendees Who Voted</i>	<i><u>MOTION</u></i> <i><u>24-11-5-1</u></i>
Jason Cole	Did not vote
Maureen Cottingham	Yea
Rachael Laenen	Yea
Daryn Miller	Yea
Robert Grether	Yea
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Unanimous</i>



COMMITTEE ACTION

ITEM 4.a: Consider Proposal from Foley & Lardner LLP regarding Wildfire Tax Relief

SUMMARY:

The attached proposal was submitted by Foley & Lardner LLP in October 2024. Katie Schoettler, Director of Public Affairs, Foley & Lardner LLP, will join the Executive Committee meeting to discuss current developments regarding wildfire tax relief and Foley's revised proposal moving forward.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

- The attached proposal from Foley indicates the firm works on a monthly flat fee retainer of \$8,000 per month for services related to the wildfire tax relief issue.

COMMITTEE OPTIONS:

- Recommend approval of Foley & Lardner LLP regarding Wildfire Tax Relief proposal to the Board
- Take no action

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Management defers to Committee discussion and recommendation to the Board, if warranted

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS:

- Proposal from Foley & Lardner LLP regarding Wildfire Tax Relief



FOLEY & LARDNER LLP

**Federal Affairs &
Government Solutions**

Prepared for:

California Avocado
Commission



Katie Schoettler
Director of Public Affairs

October 2024

October 30, 2024

California Avocado Commission

Via E-mail

Commission Executive Board:

I am pleased to submit this proposal for federal consulting and lobbying services for the California Avocado Commission (“the Commission”). We are confident that we can offer you the expertise needed to achieve your goals.

At Foley, we cover the full spectrum of public policy. Our bipartisan team has a proven track record of success, helping clients achieve their federal, political and communications priorities in all aspects of government. While Foley takes a team approach to our clients, I would be your primary point of contact for this engagement and would lead our government affairs efforts.

Most recently, I served as communications director and senior advisor to Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) where I advised the Senator on day-to-day and long-term communications, policy, and political strategies. In addition to my House and Senate experience and connections, I offer relationships with key offices on Capitol Hill including senior staff on the Agriculture Committees, Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees, House and Senate leadership, as well as key California Members of Congress. I also work frequently with various subagencies at USDA.

Foley has long-term experience representing municipal clients and public agencies, including several water authorities in California, and we have successfully secured millions of dollars through grants and appropriations funding for them. Our bipartisan team includes former Members of Congress from both parties and former senior congressional staff. Collectively, we can reach nearly all Members of Congress and key Administration officials.

Objectives for Service:

This proposed public affairs engagement has two main objectives. In the immediate term, our goal would be to ensure that wildfire settlement money received by family farms will not be taxed. We will also work to reverse the USDA’s decision to end USDA import inspections of Mexican avocados.

Scope of Work:

Tax issue: Upon being retained by the Commission, we would continue our outreach and conversations with Members of Congress and staff to educate them on your issue and the need to include family farms in legislation preventing wildfire settlements from being taxed. We will first work with House and Senate offices that already have legislation introduced to try and get a change in the language to include family farms. Our next goal would be to ensure any tax package that passes next Congress (beginning in January 2025) achieves this objective. With the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act or “TCJA” expiring next year, there will be ample time to achieve this objective.

USDA issue: We will meet with the California Delegation, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committees, as well as House and Senate leadership to educate them on this dire issue ensuring they pressure the USDA to reverse course on their Mexican avocado inspection action. Regardless of who wins the presidential election, we will work with key USDA officials to ensure they change the new status quo. Next Congress, there will be ample opportunities to achieve this objective through the Farm Bill, USMCA negotiations, as well as agriculture appropriations and standalone legislation.

Looking beyond the tax and inspection issues, we would keep the Commission’s needs forefront among Congress and the Administration. Our strategic partnership would allow for you to have a constant voice in Washington, paramount to you having a say in the lawmaking and rulemaking processes moving forward.

Pricing:

Foley’s Public Affairs team works on a monthly flat fee retainer typically starting between \$15,000 – \$20,000/month. However, because you are a friend of the firm, and based on our conversations, we would offer a discounted rate of \$13,000/month for both objectives, or \$8,000/month if you chose to move forward with an engagement focused solely on the tax issue.

This monthly fee would be inclusive of all out-of-pocket costs, administrative, overhead, payroll, and similar charges, secretarial time or secretarial overtime, word processing, photocopying, in-house printing, insurance, and other ordinary business expenses.

We are able to offer hourly rate in lieu of a flat fee retainer, however nearly all of our clients prefer flat fee because it's an overall better value for the cost.

Foley’s Public Affairs Team provides budget certainty for its legislative clients by offering all-inclusive fixed-fee monthly retainers and a 30-day opt-out clause. If you are unhappy with your service, you can cancel your contract with 30 days’ notice. Additionally, we are legally required to publicly register to lobby on behalf of your organization once we begin having conversations with policymakers or their staff.

I have attached an engagement letter for your review and consideration.

The Foley team is well equipped to execute a strategy to achieve the Commission's needs and objectives at the federal level. The attached materials are an insight into our team's experience.

Sincerely,

Katie K. Schoettler

Director of Public Affairs, Foley & Lardner LLP

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

About Us

Our bipartisan public affairs team, including former members of Congress, Chiefs of Staff, committee staff, regulators, and grassroots advocacy professionals, has decades of experience advocating on behalf of our clients at the federal level with Congress and the Administration. We have close working relationships with Members of Congress on a bicameral, bipartisan basis, including leadership (House Speaker Mike Johnson; House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries; Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell; Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer). We work frequently with both members and staff on most House and Senate committees, including, among others, the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees, which have jurisdiction over tax policy, along with the Senate and House Committees on Agriculture. We also have relationships in relevant federal agencies, including U.S. Department of Agriculture. Our experience, institutional knowledge, deep experience with the legislative and regulatory processes, and connections throughout the government help us succeed in achieving our clients' needs. Among other things, these include:

- Creating lasting relationships on Capitol Hill and in the Administration.
- Comprehensive legislative and regulatory tracking at the federal level and for all 50 states, with updates provided in real time.
- Securing federal funding through grants and the Congressional Appropriations process.
- Building out congressional caucuses and hosting advocacy fly-ins.
- Creating coalitions with unified lobbying strategies.
- Introducing legislation/inserting language into legislation.
- Garnering support for legislation.
- Reversing course on or updating Administrative actions, proposed rules and guidance.
- Successfully lobbying for hearings on specific issues as well as inserting QFRs during hearings and markups.

Our unique structure allows us to provide the attention and intimacy of a boutique shop while also leveraging the resources of our corporate law firm. Our clients work directly with the principals on each assignment, while also getting regular updates from the team. We are here 24/7 for our clients no matter what the need.

Katie Schoettler

Director, Public Affairs

kkschoettler@foley.com

Washington, D.C.

202.295.4065



Katie K. Schoettler is a Public Affairs Director with the firm and a member of the Government & Public Policy Practice in Washington, D.C. She brings extensive experience in political strategy, the legislative process and policy, crisis management, and strategic communications to Foley through her time on Capitol Hill and in local government.

Katie has over six years of experience on Capitol Hill where she worked in both chambers of Congress. Most recently, Katie served as senior advisor for Montana Senator Steve Daines where she advised him on day-to-day and long-term communications, policy, and political strategy. Working for Daines, Katie helped manage and advance key priorities and worked on policy issues including energy, land management, health care, and finance through Daines' role on the Senate Finance and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees. Before serving as senior advisor, Katie served as communications director for Daines. In this role, she worked to translate complex legislative policies into digestible language and served as the lead spokesperson for the Senator answering media inquiries and debunking false narratives. While she was working for Daines, he was named one of the most bipartisan and effective members in his class. Now, he is Chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Prior to joining Sen. Daines' office, Katie worked for the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee under former Chairman Rep. Rob Bishop. Before moving to Washington, D.C., she worked as an executive council assistant for a member of the Jacksonville, Florida City Council. Katie is an avid Jacksonville Jaguars fan.

Presentations and Publications

- Panelist and Host, "2024 Summit for Water Sustainability," *United Water Conservation District, Oxnard, CA* (October 2024)
- Speaker, "Successful Advocacy on Capitol Hill," *American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association 2024 Policy Forum, Washington, DC* (April 2024)



FOLEY & LARDNER LLP

Sectors

- Automotive
- Carbon Capture
- Energy
- Energy Transition
- Hydrogen
- International Trade & National Security
- Manufacturing
- Oil & Gas
- Renewables
- Smart Manufacturing

Practice Areas

- Federal Public Affairs
- Government Solutions

Education

- Florida State University (B.S.)
 - International Affairs

Jared B. Rifis

Director, Public Affairs

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Washington, D.C.

202.295.4154



Jared Rifis represents clients and their federal policy priorities before Congress and the Administration.

As a member of the firm's Government Solutions Practice Group, Jared provides analysis and advocacy that advance each client's public policy goals. He has experience with a wide range of federal and state policy issues and also advises clients on lobbying and PAC compliance.

Prior to joining Foley, Jared served in various roles in Congress, most recently serving as a judiciary and commerce advisor in Senator Harry Reid's leadership office, where his broad portfolio encompassed matters of technology, telecommunications, gun safety, consumer protection, gaming, patents, and more. During law school, Jared worked in the leadership office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the Judiciary Committee office of Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the think tank Third Way, and the campaign finance reform organization now known as Issue One.

Presentations and Publications

- Speaker, "Introduction to Non-Profits," Jordan's Guardian Angels 2019 Family Conference (March 30, 2019)
- Author, "Water Rights Protection," *Daily Journal* (January 9, 2019)
- Speaker, "Government Relations on the First Anniversary of Trump's Election," 2017 Executive Exchange, Chicago, IL (November 7, 2017)
- Speaker, "Pathways to Government: Climbing Capitol Hill," *Georgetown Law* (October 4, 2017)
- Speaker, Lunch and Loaves panel at *Georgetown Law* (February 2017)
- Speaker, Lunch and Loaves panel at *Georgetown Law* (February 2016)

Sectors

- [Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Cannabis](#)

- Cloud Computing Infrastructure & Solutions
- Digital Assets, Web3 & NFTs
- Energy
- Health Tech & Genomics
- Innovative Technology
- Renewables

Practice Areas

- Corporate
- Environmental
- Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)
- Federal Public Affairs
- Government Enforcement Defense & Investigations
- Government Solutions
- Public Policy & Government Relations
- State Attorneys General

Education

- Georgetown University Law Center (J.D., 2014)
 - Law Dean Scholar's Award
 - Best Exam Award in Lawmaking
 - Received "Exceptional" honors for completing over 175 hours of pro bono services
- Butler University (B.A., cum laude, 2010)
 - Political science and Spanish
 - Outstanding Senior Political Science Award for graduating with the top scholastic record

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- U.S. Supreme Court

Dennis A. Cardoza

Director, Public Affairs

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202.295.4015

Sacramento

Tampa



Dennis A. Cardoza is a public affairs director. He serves as co-chair of the Federal Public Affairs Practice and chair of the California Public Affairs Practice. He advises a broad range of clients on legislative, regulatory, and public policy and advocacy matters, and has extensive policy experience with respect to water resource, banking, housing, infrastructure, energy, agriculture, education, foreign affairs, and health care issues.

Prior to joining Foley, Dennis served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives from California's 18th District. His committee roles included serving four years on the powerful House Rules Committee while he was also a key member of the House Democratic Leadership Team. Dennis also served as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture, where he played a leading role in the formation of the 2007 Farm Bill; ranking member of the Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee of Livestock, Dairy and Poultry; member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific; member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, the Committee on Resources and its Subcommittee on Water, and the Science Committee. As a member of the House leadership, Dennis was also intimately involved in the drafting of the Affordable Care Act.

Throughout his federal service, Dennis took a leading role in advocating for fiscal discipline on the part of the government, serving as co-chair of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of House Democrats committed to fiscal responsibility and accountability for taxpayer dollars. He was also an advocate for homeowners facing mortgage difficulties following the housing crisis, and his work included authoring a modified version of the Housing Opportunity & Mortgage Equity Act and establishing a new congressional task force on housing stabilization.

Prior to his role in the House, Dennis spent six years in the California State Assembly, where he chaired the Rules Committee and helped found the Moderate Democratic Caucus. Several organizations honored then-Assemblyman Cardoza as Legislator of the Year for his efforts to cut taxes, help family farms, and promote education and children's safety. He has also served as a council member in the cities of Merced and Atwater

in California.

Awards and Recognition

- Awarded as Top Lobbyist by *The Hill*, 2022-2023
- Recipient of the UC Merced Chancellor's Medal, 2009
- Named State Legislator of the Year by the California Sherriff's Association, 2000
- Named State Legislator of the Year by the University of California Alumni Association, 1999

Affiliations

- Former board member, University of Maryland, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences Board of Visitors (2011 – 2018)
- Former member, board of directors for the Thoroughbred Owners of California (2011 – 2014)

Publications and Presentations

- Panelist, "A Post-Pandemic Approach to College Sports Venue Funding," Lead1 National Athletic Directors Association, April 25, 2023
- Speaker at Mid Pacific Water Users Conference, January 2023:
 - 1. The Red Wave that Wasn't: Looking Ahead to the Divided 118th Congress
 - 2. The ESA at Fifty: What Would President Nixon Think?
- Keynote Speaker, Theta Chi Fraternity National Convention, July 2022
- Panelist and Key Note Speaker: State-wide and Western water conferences, including National Water Resources Association; Association of California Water Agencies; Family Farm Alliance; Ventura Regional Water Summit, among others (2018-2021)
- Speaker, "Navigating California Legislative Challenges With Democrats in Control," Personal Care Products Council Spring Legislative and Legal Conference, May 1, 2019
- Author, "Water Rights Protection," *Daily Journal*, January 9, 2019
- Moderator, "Energy and Infrastructure Industry Trends and Perspectives Panel," November 3, 2017
- Keynote Speaker, Sino-American Pharmaceutical Professionals Association Conference, September 23, 2017
- Speaker, "Legislative Oversight of the Executive for the Nigerian Government," International Law Institute, August 1, 2017
- Keynote speaker, 3rd Annual California Water Summit, Sacramento, CA, June 2, 2016
- Contributor, Cardoza's Corner, *The Hill's* Congress blog
- Post-Election Commentary Panelist, U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, 2014
- Panelist, "Global Capital Markets Advisory Council: Navigating the Year Ahead – Perspectives from Around the Globe," Milken Institute 2012 Global Conference, Los Angeles, CA, April 29, 2012
- Commencement speaker, University of Maryland, 2004 and 2012
- Speaker, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, 2010 and 2011
- Speaker, United Fresh Produce Association's Washington Public Policy Conference, National Harbor, MD, September 14-16, 2010

- Speaker, National Association of Realtors Conference, 2009
- Speaker, American Bankers Association Convention, San Francisco, 2006

Sectors

- Automotive
- Cannabis
- Energy
- Energy Transition
- Health Care & Life Sciences
- Health Tech & Genomics
- Hydrogen
- Innovative Technology
- International Trade & National Security
- Manufacturing
- Oil & Gas
- Payor Provider Convergence
- Pharmaceuticals
- Renewables
- Supply Chain
- Sustainability & Product Stewardship

Practice Areas

- California Government Solutions
- Economic Development & Government Incentives
- Environmental
- Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)
- FTC Consumer Protection
- Federal Public Affairs
- Government Solutions
- Public Policy & Government Relations
- State Attorneys General

Education

- University of Maryland (B.A., 1982)
 - Government and Politics

Jennifer F. Walsh

Director, Public Affairs

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Jennifer F. Walsh is a public affairs director with the firm and a member of the firm's Government & Public Policy Practice. She has extensive experience in government affairs, including a lengthy career as a senior staffer in the U.S. Congress and the California Legislature, and as a vice president for Federal Government Affairs at a top 20 Fortune 500 health care company. Jennifer has effectively advanced key issues before the United States Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, and the Administration.

Prior to joining Foley, Jennifer served as vice president for federal government affairs at a leading multinational health care company, where she developed and executed strategies to impact policy objectives and increase the company's visibility among opinion leaders. Jennifer collaborated with colleagues across the health care industry, including third parties and trade associations to ensure the effective execution and success of the company's priorities.

Jennifer served nine years as chief of staff to former Congressman Dennis Cardoza, 18th District of California. She was chief advisor and principal strategist on all legislative and political activity and served as primary liaison with the Bush and Obama Administrations, Members of Congress, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the California Democratic Delegation. She also served as finance director for the Cardoza for Congress campaign, where she developed and managed a US \$2 million fundraising effort.

Previously she served as a chief of staff in the California State Legislature as well as a congressional field representative, deputy campaign manager, and House Democratic Caucus program director to former Congressman Vic Fazio, 3rd Congressional District of California.

Awards and Recognition

- Top Lobbyist by *The Hill* newspaper (2022 and 2023)

Affiliations

- Board Member, Future Forum Foundation
- Trustee, McLean School of Maryland

Presentations and Publications

- Guest, Healthcare IT News' HIMSSCast Podcast (February 2024, May 2024)
- Speaker, 49th ACCC 2023 Annual Meeting & Cancer Center Business Summit – Association of Community Cancer Centers (March 2023)
- Quoted, "[Biden Greenlights \\$1.2 Trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework](#)," *Inc.com* (June 24, 2021)
- Speaker, 46th ACCC 2020 Annual Meeting & Cancer Center Business Summit – Association of Community Cancer Centers (March 2020)
- Speaker, Association for Value-Based Cancer Care Conference (December 2019)

Sectors

- [Carbon Capture](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Energy Transition](#)
- [Health Care & Life Sciences](#)
- [Health Tech & Genomics](#)
- [Hydrogen](#)
- [Innovative Technology](#)
- [Payor Provider Convergence](#)
- [Pharmaceuticals](#)
- [Racial Justice & Equity](#)

Practice Areas

- [California Government Solutions](#)
- [Federal Public Affairs](#)
- [Government Solutions](#)
- [Public Policy & Government Relations](#)

Education

- University of Maryland (B.A., 1995)
 - Major: government and politics; minor: Spanish

John H. Strom

Special Counsel

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John Strom is a special counsel in the Public Policy & Government Relations Practice Group and sits in our Washington, D.C. office. John brings a wealth of legal and lobbying experience from key positions across various U.S. legislative and regulatory bodies.

John most recently served as senior counsel on the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, where he led investigations and counseled Members on issues such as drug shortages, FDA's inspection programs, and drug price negotiations under the Inflation Reduction Act. Prior to this role, he was counsel on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, managing investigations into federal agencies and government contractors and advising on public health, pandemic preparedness, and biomedical research.

Before his tenure in the Senate, John served as associate general counsel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In this role, he advised on politically sensitive matters, including the Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, industrial base expansion projects, and emergency rulemakings. Prior to joining HHS, John was senior counsel on the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, where he handled issues related to NEPA, ESA, energy development, and water resource management and oversaw investigations into Puerto Rico's fiscal reforms and recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Practice Areas

- [Corporate](#)
- [Government Solutions](#)

Education

- University of South Carolina (J.D.)
- University of South Carolina Honors College (B.A., cum laude)

Kate M. Kros

Senior Public Affairs Advisor

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202.295.4063



Kate M. Kros is a Senior Public Affairs Advisor with Foley & Lardner LLP's Government Solutions Practice Group and brings nearly 15 years of experience in grassroots advocacy, federal policy and strategic communications to her work advising clients. In her role, among other things, Kate develops and deploys advocacy strategies, provides legislative and regulatory insights, and ensures clients are in compliance with federal reporting requirements.

Prior to Foley, Kate spent eight years at a consulting firm connecting 80+ non-profit organizations, trade associations, and stakeholders with legislators, training thousands of constituents on how to successfully communicate with their members of Congress and executing large-scale advocacy fly-ins in district offices and on Capitol Hill. She scheduled hundreds of bipartisan, bicameral meetings yearly with every member of Congress.

Awards and Recognition

- 2024 Marquette University Klingler College of Arts and Sciences [Young Alumna of the Year](#)

Affiliations

Kate is a member of the Marquette University Klingler College of Arts & Sciences Leadership Council, an advisory board run by the Dean of the College. She is also a Board member of the Wisconsin State Society. From 2016 through 2021, Kate was the President of the Marquette Alumni Club of Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia, where she represented over 2,000 alumni in the second largest alumni club operated through Marquette University.

Community Involvement

Kate hosted regular events at the Les Aspin Center for Government and engaged alumni through a networking program she created. From 2017 to 2022, Kate was an inaugural member of Marquette's Young

Alumni Leadership Council, where she advocated the needs of young alumni to the university. Kate continues to volunteer at Catholic Charities regularly and has advocated on their behalf to various stakeholders in the community.

Presentations and Publications

- Panelist, “Policy Perspectives for Foster Care Awareness Month,” National Foster Youth Institute (June 8, 2023)
- Guest Lecturer: Professional Communications, The George Washington University (March 21, 2023)
- Guest Speaker: AP U.S. Government, Skutt Catholic High School (November 22, 2022)
- Guest Lecturer: Honors American Politics, Marquette University College of Arts & Sciences (November 14, 2022)
- Presenter: “Arts & Sciences Influentials,” hosted by Dr. Heidi Bostic, Dean, Marquette University Klingler College of Arts and Sciences (December 8, 2021)
- Presenter, “Beyond MU: CIRCLES – Recent Grads Cohort,” *Marquette University Alumni & Friends* (September 22, 2020)
- Presenter, “Lobbying During Lockdown- Federal Advocacy During COVID-19,” *National Water Resources Association* (May 28, 2020)

Sectors

- [Health Care & Life Sciences](#)
- [Innovative Technology](#)
- [Manufacturing](#)
- [Payor Provider Convergence](#)
- [Pharmaceuticals](#)
- [Racial Justice & Equity](#)

Practice Areas

- [Environmental](#)
- [Federal Public Affairs](#)
- [Government Solutions](#)

Education

- Marquette University (B.A., 2011)
 - Political Science
 - French
- Georgetown University (Graduate Certificate, 2015)

Ian Hopkins

Public Affairs Advisor

ian.hopkins@foley.com

Washington, D.C.

202.295.4023



Ian Hopkins supports Foley's Government Solutions Practice Group in the firm's Washington, D.C. office as a Public Affairs Advisor.

Prior to joining Foley, he was a legislative intern for the Office of Representative Gabe Amo, where he developed comprehensive research memos on foreign affairs, climate change, health care, and more. His previous experience also includes working as a legislative intern for the Office of Senator Jack Reed and as a junior fellow at the Middle East Policy Council.

Practice Areas

- [Government Solutions](#)

Education

- The Catholic University of America (B.A., 2024)
 - Politics
 - Minors: Peace and World Order Studies, Islamic World Studies

Walking Through the Federal Lobbying Compliance Questionnaire with Foley's Federal Public Affairs Team

Federal
Lobbying
Compliance

THE LOBBYING DISCLOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Company name: _____
2. Company address: _____
3. Principal place of business address (if different than above): _____
4. The primary business in which the Company is engaged: _____
5. List any entity other than the Company (including any subsidiary, affiliate, or parent of the Company) that contributes more than \$5,000 in a quarterly period to the lobbying activities to be performed by Foley & Lardner LLP, and either actively participates in and/or in whole or in major part supervises, plans, or controls the registrant's lobbying activities. You may also attach a list.

Entity Name	Address/Principal Place of Business

6. List any foreign entity that has a direct interest in the outcome of the Matter who contributes more than \$5,000 to the lobbying activities of the Company,* and either (i) holds at least 20% equitable ownership of the Company; (ii) is an affiliate of the Company that has direct interest in the outcome of the lobbying activity; or (iii) directly or indirectly, in whole or in major part, plans, supervises, controls, directs, finances, or subsidizes activities of the client or any organization identified in question 5 above. You may also attach a list.

Foreign Entity Name	Address/Principal Place of Business	Percentage Ownership of the Company	Description of Entity's Interest in the Matter and Amount of Contribution to Lobbying Activities

**The requirement to disclose a foreign interest is not contingent upon the entity making a contribution of \$5,000 or more to the Company during that particular reporting period*

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- ✓ Return the questionnaire to the lobbyist, if returning it attached to the engagement letter, or to Kate Kros.
- ✓ This questionnaire is due with the engagement letter.
- ✓ For questions about the letter, the questionnaire, or about federal compliance in general, contact Kate Kros:



Kate M. Kros
Sr. Public Affairs Advisor
202.295.4063
kkros@foley.com



COMMITTEE ACTION

ITEM 4.b: Consider Proposal to Retain Ballard Partners, Inc.

SUMMARY:

The CAC Policy Task Force met on December 3, 2024, which included a discussion with Ballard Partners, Inc. and their proposal for the following services:

- Working to delay the finalization of the Operational Work Plan between the USDA and NPPO of Guatemala. Said workplan will include details of the NPPO's responsibilities regarding monitoring and auditing groves.
- Work to have the inspections in Mexico return to previous levels of USDA oversight.

The CAC Policy Task Force has moved this proposal to the Executive Committee for consideration at the December 17, 2024 meeting, at which point a recommendation may be brought to the Board for their consideration.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

- If the Executive Committee recommends acceptance of the Ballard Partners, Inc. proposal, it would be a \$300,000 commitment, and result in a \$275,000 increase in the 2024-25 budget for 11 months of service in the current fiscal year.

COMMITTEE OPTIONS:

- Recommend approval of Ballard Partners, Inc. proposal to the Board
- Take no action

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Management defers to Committee discussion and recommendation to the Board, if warranted

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS:

- Ballard Partners, Inc. proposal and supporting documentation

From: [Ken Melban](#)
To: [Robert Jackson](#); varaiza.mfm@gmail.com; [Robert Grether](#); rachael@kimballavocados.com; Jamie@simpatica.ag
Cc: jcolecado@gmail.com; [April Aymami](#); [George Soares](#); [Terry Splane](#)
Subject: Policy Task Force
Date: Monday, December 2, 2024 12:17:32 PM
Attachments: [California Avocado Commission \(2\)final.pdf](#)
[Inside the Lobbying Career of Susie Wiles, Trump's New Chief of Staff - The New York Times.pdf](#)
[Pam Bondi, Trump's Attorney General Pick, Lobbied for Amazon, Uber, and Qatar.pdf](#)
[The Most Powerful Lobbyist in Trump's Washington - POLITICO Magazine.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Good afternoon,

In preparation for tomorrow's Policy Task Force call attached for your review is a proposal from Ballard Partners. I've also attached two recent articles on Ballard Partners and one from 2018. In terms of process, if the Task Force has any recommendations they will be considered for action at the Board's 12/17 meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Ken

Ken Melban
Vice President Industry Affairs & Operations

kmelban@avocado.org

559.859.6811 cell



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About Us



The Beginning

In 1998, Brian Ballard founded the Firm with one office located in Tallahassee, Florida. Since the firm's founding, Ballard Partners has grown exponentially, with offices in Washington D.C., Boston, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Istanbul, Abuja, Lagos, Tel-Aviv, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and multiple locations throughout Florida.



Today

As recognized by *Politico*, *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Miami Herald*, *Florida Trend*, and more - Ballard Partners is a "lobbying powerhouse" and "growing force" in the lobbying world.



Our Team

Ballard Partners is comprised of 45 full-time, bi-partisan professionals with substantial backgrounds in all levels of government. This includes former members of Congress, Ambassadors, and former top staff members from across government.



Why Ballard Partners?

Ballard Partners is dedicated to achieving results for our clients. To do that requires a relentless work ethic, unparalleled experience, and deep relationships with decision makers. These are the qualities that make up the Firm's DNA and are why we have earned the trust of our clients for over two decades.



Representative Clients


The Firm represents over 500 diverse clients – from global innovators and disruptive technologies to major league sports dynasties and Fortune 500 companies. Our clients are our family, many of which we have represented for decades. We pride ourselves on client satisfaction and retention. At Ballard Partners we believe maintaining the highest degree of quality representation is central to our successful and continued relationship with our clients. Our experience, resources and dedication effectively prepare us to undertake the most complex issues facing our clients.


Meet a few of the outstanding clients we have represented.




In The News

 Go-to for major corporations.
(11/07/24)

 Leading Washington lobbying firm.
(09/02/24)


 Powerful.
(05/19/23)

 Most desired envoys.
(11/30/24)


 Powerhouse lobbyist in Tallahassee and D.C.
(05/19/23)

 Powerhouse.
(11/22/24)

 Prominent.
(02/19/2024)

 Considered one of the all-time greats of lobbying.
(12/05/23)

 Top Lobbyist.
(08/30/22)

 Powerhouse lobbying firm.
(08/21/23)

In The News



Ballard has years of experience navigating the complicated tightly regulated world of advocacy, having run one of Florida's best-known lobbying shops for more than two decades.
(10/21/20)



Influential.
(04/29/23)



Influential.
(01/06/23)



Influential.
(06/25/22)



Major Republican lobbyist.
(07/11/22)



Top Lobbyist.
(08/30/22)



One of the top lobbyists in Washington.
(09/07/24)



Considered one of the all-time greats of lobbying.
(12/05/23)



A top lobbying firm with connections across the US government.
(03/07/22)

Scope of Services and Proposed Rate

SCOPE

- Ballard Partners proposes the following scope of work to be performed by Congressman Jeff Miller ret., Partner, Dan McFaul, Managing Partner and Hunter Morgan, Partner.
- Ballard Partners is uniquely qualified to support the California Avocado Commission (CAC) in this federal engagement. We will seek to advance before all levels of the federal government the objectives of CAC. The objectives include:
 - Working to delay the finalization of the Operational Work Plan between the USDA and NPPO of Guatemala. Said workplan will include details of the NPPO's responsibilities regarding monitoring and auditing groves.
 - Work to have the inspections in Mexico return to previous levels of USDA oversight.
- Initial onboarding of Jeff Miller and his designee to identify specific areas of policy focus relevant to CAC and its products and services.
- Ballard will organize initial meetings with Members of the US Senate and House and appropriate federal departments or agencies to ascertain situational awareness and support levels for the stated objectives.
- Bi-weekly check in calls (more often if desired) to discuss federal policy development impacting the CAC.
- Potential reforms to Agricultural policy under the 119th Congress and the Trump Administration.

RATE

- The proposed rate for this scope of services is to be paid in monthly installments of \$25,000 for 12 months.

Team Members



Brian Ballard - President -

Brian has earned a reputation as a tireless, persistent and effective advocate for his clients' interests. He has been recognized in The Hill: Top Lobbyists / Hired Guns and Florida Trend's Most Influential Business Leaders every year since 2020. He was also named a member of Vanity Fair's "New Establishment for 2019", and listed among the 18 to watch in 2018 by Politico Playbook Power List. His accomplishments have spanned over 25 years and includes legislative successes on hundreds of policy and funding initiatives in Florida and Washington, DC.

Brian has taken his passion for politics and policy to the national scene, opening up Ballard Partners' Washington, DC office in February 2017. He is spearheading the firm's successful efforts with a first-class bi-partisan government relations team that represents clients across the federal landscape and impacting a myriad of domestic and foreign affairs issues.

As one of the top political insiders in Florida and Washington, Brian's political portfolio includes meaningful roles in several presidential and gubernatorial campaigns. He chaired the Florida Finance Committee of Republican presidential nominees John McCain in 2008, Mitt Romney in 2012 and Donald J. Trump in 2016. Additionally, Brian has served as vice chairman of the Presidential Inaugural Committee and was appointed as a member of the Presidential Transition Finance Committee. Recognizing his formidable fundraising and political skills, the Republican National Committee tapped Brian to serve as the Finance Vice Chairman to help build resources for key national races.

Brian and his wife Kathryn were honored to be selected by three Florida Governors to plan and execute their inaugural ceremony and events, serving as Co-Chairs of the inauguration for Governor Ron DeSantis, Governor Rick Scott and Governor Charlie Crist.

Among his important public service experience, Brian currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He previously served on the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service Advisory Council, after appointment by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. He also directed the transition and assisted in the U.S. Senate confirmation of Governor Bob Martinez as the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (Drug Czar) in the Executive Office of the President.

Brian Ballard

As chief of staff in the Executive Office of the Governor, Brian developed a special interest in environmental issues. Among his accomplishments, he served as chief architect of Preservation 2000, the largest public acquisition program for environmentally sensitive lands in the nation. He also served as Florida's chief negotiator with the U.S. Department of the Interior to end offshore drilling along the state's southeast coastline and the Florida Keys. The American Lawyer magazine rated Brian as one of America's top rated lawyers in the field of Energy, Environmental and Natural Resources law.

Committed to community service, Brian has been a member of the Council of 100, the Collins Center for Public Policy, Florida Governor's Mansion Foundation, and the City of Tallahassee Architectural Review Board. He has received Florida's highest award for historic preservation recognizing his efforts involving preservation of historic buildings. In 2016, Brian and Kathryn were inducted into Florida State University's Francis Eppes Society for their philanthropic support to the University.

Before establishing Ballard Partners, Brian served as managing shareholder for Bryant Miller Olive P.A. He currently serves as counsel to Panza, Maurer & Maynard, P.A. He received both his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida, where he was later inducted into the University's Hall of Fame.

Team Members



Jeff Miller - Partner -

Congressman Jeff Miller represented Florida's 1st Congressional District from October 16, 2001, to January 3, 2017, in the U.S. House of Representatives. He chaired the House Veterans Affairs Committee for three consecutive terms, spearheading critical reforms and expanding healthcare options for veterans nationwide.

During his 15 years in Congress, Jeff became a steadfast advocate for veterans and national security. His legislative legacy includes the landmark \$10 billion Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act, which was negotiated with Senator Bernie Sanders and the Obama Administration. This Act expanded access to healthcare for veterans by funding community partnerships with private-sector providers, ensuring that veterans receive prompt and quality care through a broader network of healthcare options.

Jeff also served as a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where he played a key role in national defense and intelligence oversight.

A recognized leader in veterans' issues, Jeff served as a 2016 Trump campaign's veterans affairs surrogate and was the principal author of Trump's 10-point veterans policy paper, which laid the foundation for transforming veterans' healthcare and benefits.

As an active member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Jeff traveled to over 60 countries, gaining valuable insight into global affairs, U.S. alliances, and international defense partnerships. Known for his principled leadership, he upheld a voting record focused on fiscal responsibility, national security, and tax relief for American citizens, while maintaining a collaborative, bipartisan approach to achieving results.

Before his time in Congress, Jeff served in the Florida House of Representatives, where he chaired the Utilities & Telecommunications Committee. Earlier in his career, he worked in public service as a deputy sheriff, reinforcing his lifelong commitment to serving the public. Jeff earned a bachelor's degree in Broadcast News from the University of Florida in 1984.

Jeff and his wife, Vicki, are the proud parents of two children, grandparents to four, and great-grandparents to three, cherishing a family legacy built on service and dedication.

Team Members



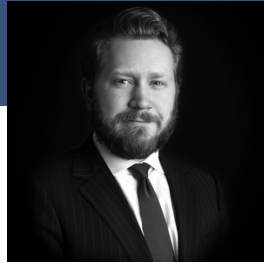
Dan McFaul - Managing Partner -

Dan McFaul has been involved with more than 30 federal, state, and local campaigns in the last two decades, including races for Congress, U.S. Senate, and Governor, as well as Presidential campaigns. He served as campaign manager to Congressman Joe Scarborough in 1996 and 2000. In 1998, he worked as a Senior Field Analyst for the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) and consulted on eight Congressional campaigns in the Southeast and Ohio River Valley.

Dan served on the staff of U.S. Rep. Joe Scarborough of Florida from 1997-2001, rising to the position of Legislative Director. He became the Chief of Staff and Communications Director for Congressman Jeff Miller on Oct. 16th 2001, when Miller was sworn into office. Prior to Miller's election, Dan was Miller's campaign manager during the 2001 special election cycle. Dan was a member of the Presidential Transition Team for then President-elect Donald J. Trump. In this capacity, Dan worked on the Appointments Team responsible for recruiting and vetting potential appointees to the incoming Administration, specifically for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Armed Services, and the Intelligence community.

A native of Pensacola, Dan graduated from the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Relations. He later completed a Master's Degree in Public Administration at the University of West Florida. Dan lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife, Jessica, and their three children.

Team Members



Hunter Morgen - Partner -

Hunter Morgen is a Partner at Ballard Partners, having joined the firm after serving more than three years in the Trump Administration as a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor for Policy and Strategy in the Trump White House. Hunter provides firm clients with strategic consulting on policy matters.


During his tenure in the Trump Administration, Hunter worked in the White House as a principal deputy to Peter Navarro and Stephen Miller, specializing in trade and immigration matters. Among his many responsibilities, Hunter drafted executive orders, legislation, policy guidance and regulations. He also directed the Administration's efforts on Buy American/Hire American policy and the unprecedented reform of the oldest UN international organization, the Universal Postal Union.

Prior to his White House position, Hunter was a Policy Advisor at the State Department in the Office of Policy and Planning. Before that he worked in Trump 2016 campaign headquarters and on the Presidential transition team focusing on speechwriting and policy.

In 2020, Hunter was appointed by President Trump to be a member of the Presidential Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture. He also serves as a Distinguished Fellow to the American Cornerstone Institute.

Inside the Lobbying Career of Trump's New Chief of Staff

Before managing the campaign of President-elect Donald J. Trump, Susie Wiles represented a tobacco company and a mining project, among others.


 Listen to this article · 8:29 min [Learn more](#)



By Kate Kelly and Kenneth P. Vogel

Reporting from Washington

Published Nov. 21, 2024 Updated Nov. 22, 2024

Donald J. Trump's first presidential transition was marked by chaos and vows to drain the swamp. 

His second transition is moving more quickly, in part because of the leadership of a veteran operative who until earlier this year represented special interests of the sort he had once pledged to curb.

The appointment of that operative, Susie Wiles, to be Mr. Trump's chief of staff in the White House signals that his second term, like his first, may not be as hostile to special interests as his campaign rhetoric suggested. It also underscores the utility of having advisers who understand the intersection of politics, business and government.

A longtime strategist and lobbyist for business interests and political campaigns, Ms. Wiles ran Mr. Trump's campaign, and her trusted role in the new administration is already evident. She has been deeply involved in assembling Mr. Trump's new executive office. Last week, she addressed an influential group of donors in Las Vegas, saying, among other things, that Mr. Trump planned to reinstate some of his prior executive orders that President Biden had revoked.

Ms. Wiles, 67, was registered as a lobbyist until early this year. She did not sever ties with Mercury Public Affairs, where she began working in 2022, until after she was named chief of staff on Nov. 7, said two people familiar with the timing who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private matters.

Her appointment continues a tradition of onetime lobbyists being tapped for high-level government posts by presidents from both parties. They include Ron Klain, who was Mr. Biden's first chief of staff, though his last disclosed lobbying activity was more than 15 years before he took the White House role.

This so-called revolving door has drawn criticism from government ethics groups.

One consumer advocacy group, Public Citizen, has warned about Ms. Wiles's lobbying background and demanded that she recuse herself from policy matters that might affect her former clients.

"By putting a corporate lobbyist in charge of his administration with his first act as president-elect, Trump is hanging a 'for sale' sign on the front door of the White House," Jon Golinger, who investigates corporate influence on elections and government at the organization, said in a statement.

Other ethics experts are more willing to withhold judgment. They stress the importance of Ms. Wiles's adherence to ethics guidelines — under which most presidential administrations require that employees recuse themselves from matters related to their past employment within the past two years. Mr. Trump's team has indicated that it plans to release such guidelines.

John Delaney, the former mayor of Jacksonville, Fla., who hired Ms. Wiles three decades ago as his communications director and later appointed her as his chief of staff, said he did not think of her as a "backslapping, fund-raising, delivering-envelopes-of-campaign-checks kind of lobbyist." Mr. Trump calls her the "ice maiden," an affectionate nod to her reserved nature.

Ms. Wiles spent most of her political career working on Republican campaigns or in local and federal government offices. Doug Mills/The New York Times

Brian Hughes, a spokesman for the transition, said in a statement that Ms. Wiles “has an undeniable reputation of the highest integrity and steadfast commitment to service both inside and outside government” and “will bring this same integrity and commitment as she serves President Trump in the White House.”

During his recent campaign, Mr. Trump continued to voice skepticism about lobbyists.

“You have to stop listening to lobbyists,” Mr. Trump said in an interview with the podcaster Theo Von in August. “You know, I was not a big person for lobbyists, and if they have even a little access to a president or a senator or a congressman or woman,” he added, “they get a lot of money, and in some cases they just take the money, they don’t do anything.”

Yet Mr. Trump’s nominee to lead the Transportation Department in his second term, Sean Duffy, was a registered lobbyist for a coalition of airlines in 2020 and for a group of investors holding Venezuelan government debt as recently as last year.

On Thursday, Mr. Trump tapped Pam Bondi as his pick for attorney general. Ms. Bondi is a former Florida attorney general and lobbyist with **Ballard Partners**, a lobbying firm run by the prominent Florida Republican fund-raiser Brian Ballard.

And during his campaign, lobbyists were among Mr. Trump’s top fund-raisers and advisers. Demand for their services jumped after the election, as corporate and foreign interests jockeyed to curry favor with the new administration.

Ms. Wiles, the daughter of the sportscaster and onetime N.F.L. kicker Pat Summerall, spent most of her political career working on Republican campaigns or in local and federal government offices. In recent decades, she has run campaigns for Senator Rick Scott and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, with whom she fell out before he challenged Mr. Trump in this year’s primaries.

In 2011, Ms. Wiles joined **Ballard Partners**. After Mr. Trump’s victory in 2016 — a campaign that Ms. Wiles ran in Florida and for which Mr. Ballard was a top financial backer — she helped **Ballard Partners** open an office in Washington, where there was in high demand for the firm’s services because of its ties to Mr. Trump.

She was registered to lobby for about 40 clients during her years at **Ballard Partners**, ranging from the city of Jacksonville to major companies and foreign interests, including a Nigerian political party and a media company owned by a Venezuelan billionaire who would later be indicted on charges related to money laundering.

Mr. Ballard said that Ms. Wiles did no work for the Nigerian party or the media company, and that most of her work for other clients focused on strategy and messaging, rather than lobbying.

Brian Ballard, a prominent Florida Republican fund-raiser, in Washington in 2018. Ms. Wiles joined his lobbying firm in 2011. Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

He said the firm registered her as a lobbyist for many clients “out of an abundance of caution,” at a time when it was just beginning its federal lobbying.

“We were new to town, and we basically registered in many cases everybody in the firm for all clients,” he said. “If she was ever in a meeting with a senator or a congressman where an issue came up, we wanted to make sure that she was covered.”

She helped the Suzanne Wright Foundation try to persuade the government to prioritize researching pancreatic cancer. She coached the Motion Picture Association to emphasize its industry’s ability to create well-paying domestic jobs in seeking beneficial tax measures and copyright protections from the Trump administration, which it won, according to the association’s executive vice president for government affairs, Patrick Kilcur.

Ms. Wiles also helped land another Ballard Partners lobbying client, the Pebble Partnership, Mr. Ballard said. The Pebble Partnership had been tussling with environmental regulators for more than a decade when it hired Mr. Ballard’s firm in 2019 to help it secure regulatory permits for an open-pit copper and gold ore mine in southwestern Alaska that was opposed by environmental and Native groups as a threat to salmon breeding grounds in the nearby Bristol Bay.

Mr. Trump had initially signaled support for the Pebble Partnership’s planned mine. But in 2020, Mr. Trump’s eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., went public with his opposition and the Army Corps of Engineers ultimately denied the permit.

The client with which Ms. Wiles is most closely associated, the tobacco company Swisher International, is based in Jacksonville, near her home. She worked for the company when it was a client of Ballard Partners, then took the account with her to Mercury, where it was the only client she registered to lobby for, according to federal filings. Her work for Swisher, said people familiar with it, focused mainly on advising on regulatory policy issues.

Swisher has in recent years been battling the Food and Drug Administration over whether flavored cigars should be banned in an effort to curb consumption of tobacco by minors and young adults. Mr. Trump was opposed to flavored tobacco in the past, but recently vowed on social media to “save Vaping again!”

Ms. Wiles helped Swisher by organizing interest groups and others to oppose a potential ban, according to someone familiar with the matter. She has denied influencing the president-elect on the topic.

Kitty Bennett contributed research, and Aishvarya Kavi contributed reporting.

Kate Kelly covers money, policy and influence for The Times. [More about Kate Kelly](#)

Kenneth P. Vogel is based in Washington and investigates the intersection of money, politics and influence. [More about Kenneth P. Vogel](#)

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 23 of the New York edition with the headline: Inside Trump Chief of Staff's Lobbying Career



Former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi address the Republican National Convention on Aug. 25, 2020 in Washington, DC. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Summary

Bondi is a partner at the lobbying firm of Trump bundler Brian Ballard, where she lobbied alongside incoming White House chief of staff Susie Wiles.

[On this page](#)

Pam Bondi, a former Florida attorney general and lobbyist whose clients have included Amazon and Uber, is President-elect Trump's new nominee to serve as U.S. attorney general, announced in a post on Trump's social media platform.

A Trump ally, Bondi is a partner in the D.C. office of **Ballard Partners**, a lobbying and government affairs firm founded by Brian Ballard, who was [called](#) the “most powerful lobbyist in Trump's Washington.” The attorney general of Florida from 2011 until 2019, Bondi was a member of Trump's Opioid and Drug Abuse Commission during his first term. She was named hours after just-resigned Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz gave up his nomination for A.G.



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At Ballard, Bondi chairs the Corporate Regulatory Compliance practice, which is [described](#) as rolling out initiatives to help clients “elevate their corporate responsibility reputation,” among other things. Some of the firm's top-spending federal lobbying clients this year include British American Tobacco and US Sugar. Another firm client is [Nippon Steel](#), which has been working to acquire United States Steel and in April hired the firm's president Brian Ballard and others. Ballard was one of the top Trump fundraisers in 2016 and a Trump campaign [bundler](#) again this cycle—according to a New York Times [source](#), to the tune of \$50 million.

In July 2019, Bondi was [registered](#) through Ballard to lobby for the government of Qatar on human trafficking issues, along with the firm's James Rubin, for a fee of \$115,000 per month. She [severed](#) her position at Ballard in November 2019 to help defend President Trump during his first impeachment trial—in lobbying [filings](#), Bondi listed her former position as “special adviser to the president, office of White House Counsel, special government employee (2019-2020)”—then restarted her lobbying contracts.

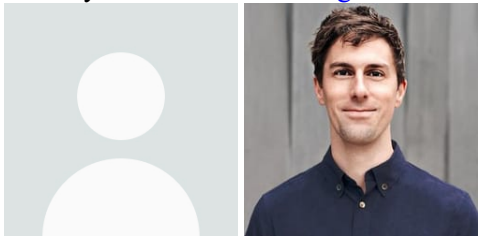
Bondi also holds two chair roles with the right-wing think tank America First Policy institute, a pro-Trump nonprofit that was led by Trump donor Linda McMahon, at its Center for Litigation and Center for Law and Justice. She was [appointed](#) to be a Kennedy Center trustee by Trump in 2020 as a plum for her support, and she acted as a campaign surrogate this year.

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David Moore

POLITICO



M. Scott Mahaseky/POLITICO

THE POLITICO MAG PROFILE

The Most Powerful Lobbyist in Trump's Washington

Hint: It's not Corey Lewandowski.

By THEODORIC MEYER | April 02, 2018

When Brian Ballard signed the lease last year for an office on the second floor of the Homer Building, a downtown Washington edifice that's home to a number of lobbying firms, he promised himself he would stay in the space for five years. He lasted one. In February, his firm, Ballard Partners, moved into a bigger office on the fourth floor to accommodate the new lobbyists Ballard has hired since the election of one of his former clients, President Donald Trump.

At the firm's first staff meeting in the new offices, Ballard and five of his Washington lobbyists sat in new leather chairs around a small conference table, with Ballard at the head. Robert Wexler, a former Democratic congressman from Florida whom Ballard hired last year, phoned in from Paris with an update on the firm's work for the Turkish government. Jamie Rubin, a former assistant secretary of state in the Clinton administration, called from Brussels and updated Ballard on a meeting he'd had with Moise Katumbi, an exiled opposition leader from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who's a client.

"You'll be happy to hear that we signed the Maldives today," Syl Lukis, another Ballard lobbyist, told Rubin.

"Let's fire away quickly on Kosovo and Turkey," Ballard said. (The government of Kosovo is another Ballard client.)

Other Ballard lobbyists gave updates on their meetings with Trump administration officials and other work on behalf of the dozens of clients they represent in Washington, including Amazon, Dish Network, Uber, Pernod Ricard (the makers of Jameson whiskey and Absolut vodka) and Trulieve (a Florida-based medical marijuana company). Rebecca Benn, a former congressional staffer Ballard hired last year, updated Ballard and another lobbyist, Susie Wiles, on a meeting she'd set up for a client. "They were very, very happy — thank you, Susie — for the meeting at the White House last week," Benn said. "It went very, very well."

Ballard is a veteran Florida lobbyist who's been in Washington for barely a year — the blink of an eye in an industry in which many of the top practitioners have spent decades inside the Beltway. But Ballard is closer to the president than perhaps any other lobbyist in town. He's parlayed that relationship into a booming business helping clients get their way with the Trump administration — and his clients and even some of his rivals say his firm has a better grasp of what's going on in the West Wing than almost anyone else on K Street. Ballard

was one of the top fundraisers in the country for Trump's campaign and continues to raise millions for his reelection campaign. Wiles, one of his top lieutenants, ran Trump's campaign in Florida and delivered the nation's biggest swing state to the president.

Ballard's relationship with Trump has helped him solve a lucrative puzzle that has frustrated more established players. For all of the president's "drain the swamp" rhetoric, the new administration has given corporate America and its lobbyists the opportunity to revive dreams of tax cuts, regulatory rollbacks and rule changes that were mothballed during the Obama administration. But Trump also presents a challenge for the influence business — a White House in which key positions at least initially were as likely to be staffed by Trump loyalists as by old Washington hands with ties to K Street. Ballard has helped to bridge the gap. He's a Trump-friendly out-of-towner who can connect with the establishment — he is a close ally of Senator Marco Rubio as well as Charlie Crist, the former centrist Republican governor of Florida who is now a Democratic congressman — and make corporate clients comfortable.

Ballard isn't the only person in Trump's orbit who decided to try his or her luck in Washington. Campaign veterans from Corey Lewandowski, Trump's fired-but-never-forgotten campaign manager, on down have flocked to "the swamp" to lobby the administration — or, in Lewandowski's case, to offer clients a glimpse into Trump's thought process without actually registering to lobby. But Ballard appears to have landed the biggest fish. He has signed more than 60 clients since setting up shop in Washington after Trump's inauguration, including blue-chip companies like American Airlines and Sprint. Those clients paid Ballard nearly \$10 million last year for help navigating Trump's first year in office. (Those numbers don't include the \$3.1 million the firm says it brought in representing foreign clients such as Turkey and the Dominican Republic.)

"He's the only guy that's done it," said Robert Stryk, a lobbyist who runs in the same circles as some former Trump campaign hands and moved to Washington himself after the election. (Stryk's company, SPG, bills itself as a "private diplomacy" firm rather than a traditional lobbying shop.)

Lobbyists at some of Washington's established firms are quick to praise Ballard, but they also wonder how long his success can last, given the unique nature of the Trump administration. There are risks to building a shop around one principal's relationships. The now-defunct firms of Ed Gillespie, who was one of Washington's most powerful lobbyists during George W. Bush's administration, or Tony Podesta, who thrived under Barack Obama, might be regarded as cautionary tales. "Brian is building a strong Washington office, but the question is what happens when the circus leaves town," one Republican lobbyist with close ties of his own to the administration told me.

Unlike Lewandowski, who hasn't been able to resist boasting about his relationship with Trump as he hustles for clients, Ballard has taken pains to avoid the appearance of cashing in on his relationship with the president. He refuses to speak on the record about how often he

talks with the president. But his clients say he's been able to figure out how the Trump administration works in a way no one else has. For now, at least, it's working for him.

Trump called Ballard in the days before he announced he would run for president. The two men have known each other for nearly 30 years. Ballard met Trump after picking up a copy of *The Art of the Deal* in the 1980s. He read the book and was so struck by it that he wrote Trump a letter telling him how much he'd enjoyed it. "I loved the idea of 15-minute meetings," Ballard told me years later. "That's one of the things in the book that still stands out to me." He later told the *Orlando Sentinel* that he didn't believe in meetings that lasted any longer. Trump wrote "this beautiful letter" back, Ballard says, and they kept in touch.

Ballard ended up working on and off as Trump's Florida lobbyist, helping the Trump Organization negotiate state and local government when issues came up with Trump's Doral golf club. A decade before Trump announced his presidential run, Ballard helped orchestrate a fundraiser in 2005 at Trump Tower in Manhattan for Crist's campaign for Florida governor. "A friend told me about his record," Trump told the *St. Petersburg Times* at the time, referring to Crist. "I checked him out. I met him, I liked him, and I said I could help."

Ballard, like most of Florida's Republican establishment, backed Jeb Bush in the primary, but when Trump called he offered to do what he could for his client. In September, as it became clear that Trump's lead in the polls wasn't going away, Ballard dispatched Wiles to New York to meet with Trump. Wiles was named the Trump campaign's Florida co-chairwoman a few weeks later.

It took months for Ballard himself to come around to Trump. He jumped ship first to Rubio's campaign and signed on with Trump only once it was clear he would be the Republican nominee. But once he was in, Ballard proved a valuable asset. Florida is home to lots of wealthy Republican donors, and Ballard knew most of them after raising money for John McCain and Mitt Romney's presidential campaigns. Trump named Ballard his Florida finance chairman, and Ballard raised millions for his campaign. He spoke with Trump often and traveled on the campaign plane with him. The effort also put him in close touch with Reince Priebus, the Republican National Committee chairman who would be tapped as White House chief of staff, and Steven Mnuchin, the campaign's finance chairman, who's now treasury secretary. Trump spent more time in Florida in the general election than in any other state. And "whenever we did an event in Florida I was there," Ballard said.

Ballard watched the election returns come in with Lukis at an apartment he keeps in Manhattan. They didn't know whether Trump would win — although Wiles later said she was confident he would pull it off — but they hoped he'd at least carry Florida. When it became clear

Trump would become president, they high-fived and walked over to the victory party. The calls from clients started the next day. “To say they were freaking out is absolutely maybe even an understatement,” Wiles said.

Some Trump campaign hands almost immediately began trying to figure out whether they would be working in the new administration or lobbying it. Ballard, who was raising money for the inaugural committee, moved more slowly, waiting to open his Washington office until after the inauguration. (His firm began representing a half dozen federal clients before Trump took office, according to disclosure filings, but Ballard says he didn't do any lobbying until later). Within three months of the inauguration, though, Ballard had signed two dozen clients, not just Amazon and American Airlines, but also Prudential and the GEO Group, a private prison operator.

Many early clients were companies Ballard already represented in Florida. Those clients beget more clients. “We started representing Dish [Network],” Ballard said. “They referred us to MGM, who referred us to H&R Block, who's referring us to another client right now.” Signing high-profile corporate clients helped Ballard lobbyists get meetings with Trump administration officials, which helped him snag more clients. No one screened Ballard's calls during his first months in Washington, so he ended up turning away some “squirrely” would-be clients himself: people who wanted to lobby the State Department to buy their patents, bitcoin speculators, people with “some really weird gold issues.” “If it's anyone who says I want to pay you to set up a meeting with the president or whatever, we just say no out of hand,” Ballard said. “We end that conversation. We don't do that stuff.”

Ballard isn't the only Washington lobbyist who has a personal relationship with Trump. Dave Urban, a veteran lobbyist who helped Trump carry Pennsylvania, is also widely believed to be close to the president. But Ballard's clients say many other Republican lobbyists in town haven't figured out how to negotiate the Trump administration more than a year into his presidency.

“I'll be very honest about this: I still don't feel this town has caught up,” Richard Haselwood, a lobbyist for one of Ballard's clients, the tobacco giant Reynolds American, said one night in February as he sipped a martini. Ballard, Wiles and I, along with a couple of other Ballard lobbyists, had met Haselwood for drinks at Mastro's, a steakhouse across the street from Ballard's Washington office (and three blocks east of the White House) that's become enough of a haunt for Ballard lobbyists that they've started to learn the names of the waitresses.

Congressman Matt Gaetz dropped by the table, cocktail in hand. Gaetz, a baby-faced freshman from Florida, is closer to Trump than most House Republicans. He's flown on Air Force One and is a frequent presence defending Trump on Fox News, CNN and MSNBC, which has gotten the president's attention. Gaetz has bragged that Trump sometimes calls him when he gets off the air. But even Gaetz sometimes needs help from Ballard lobbyists to get what he wants from the West Wing. “Even as a friend of the president who speaks frequently with the president, sometimes I have to call Susie Wiles to get my way,” he said.

Haselwood was one of a number of lobbyists for Ballard's Florida clients who urged him in the weeks after the election to consider setting up shop in Washington. Reynolds American, like other big companies, was struggling to figure out how to negotiate what would soon be Trump's Washington. Haselwood recalled Ballard being mobbed at the Republican Governors Association meeting in Orlando the week after the election. "Everyone is down there," he said. "No one knew what was going on. Brian came in and people were, like, rushing to him."

Ballard has helped clients like Reynolds map out who's really calling the shots in Trump's administration, where aides and even Cabinet members can be influential one week and out of favor the next. "Brian jumped in and jumped in big, and I'm thrilled," Haselwood added. "I'd feel naked without him."

Ballard spent nearly two decades figuring out how to dine and golf with Florida's governors without abusing his relationships with them. He told the *St. Petersburg Times* a decade ago that he avoided lobbying Crist unless the governor's staffers were present. "I don't sneak it in while we're shooting the breeze," Ballard told the paper. "It doesn't work that way. It would be gross."

He grew up in Delray Beach, Florida, one of six children raised by a single mother. He got his start in politics at 24, when he took time off from law school to work as a travel aide and driver to Tampa Mayor Bob Martinez, a Republican waging a long-shot campaign for governor. When Martinez won, Ballard moved to Tallahassee to work for him and traded in his 1980 Toyota Tercel for a silver BMW. By the time the *Orlando Sentinel* profiled him in 1990, Ballard was the governor's chief of staff and had just married Kathryn Smith, the daughter of Florida Secretary of State Jim Smith, in what another newspaper called "Tallahassee's wedding of the year." (George Steinbrenner, a future Ballard client, was a guest.) The *Sentinel* profile recounted Ballard yukking it up on the phone with Jeb Bush — who was chairman of Martinez's reelection campaign — and described him as the "brat-savant of Florida politics."

Martinez lost reelection in 1990 to Lawton Chiles, a Democrat, and Ballard stuck around Tallahassee as a lobbyist. It wasn't an easy time to start out as a Republican lobbyist: Democrats held majorities in both chambers of the Florida Legislature and the governorship. But Republicans won control of the Florida Senate in 1994 and took the House two years later. And in 1998, Ballard's old pal Jeb Bush was elected governor.

A few weeks after the election, the *Ledger* of Lakeland, Florida, reported that Ballard's firm — called Smith, Ballard, Bradshaw and Logan at the time — had something other Tallahassee lobbying firms "only wish they could claim: an undeniably special relationship with Bush that is being cautiously defended." Ballard brashly told the paper his firm had no more access to Bush than anyone else. "Anyone who

thinks that when they are hiring us they have secured some special niche in the administration is wrong and should save their money,” Ballard said. “Don't hire us. Go somewhere else.”

Despite his protestations at the time, Ballard proved remarkably successful over the next two decades at cultivating friendships with Florida's Republican governors. He was an early supporter of Crist's successful campaign to succeed Bush. When Rick Scott, a former hospital executive, beat the candidate Ballard was backing in the Republican primary to replace Crist, Ballard hustled to win him over, raising enough money for Scott's general-election campaign that Scott named him chairman of his inaugural committee after he won. Ballard also hired the woman who'd managed Scott's dark-horse campaign: Wiles, who would help Trump win Florida six years later. Mac Stipanovich, a longtime Republican lobbyist in Florida who hired Ballard to work on the Martinez campaign three decades ago, said Ballard has had “private, mansion-dinner relationships with every governor of Florida since” Bush. (The two men remain friends even though Stipanovich claims to “hate Trump worse than a snake.”)

Ballard is 56, with a tanned face and slightly sandy brown hair. He splits his time between Tallahassee, New York and Washington these days, but he retains something of a Florida air about him. When I met him at his office one morning in January, he wore a blue suit, a bright white shirt open at the collar and loafers. Lobbyists who know Ballard in Florida say he can be intensely competitive, but in person he's warm and laughs easily. Unlike many other Washington lobbyists, he doesn't seem like he's trying to ingratiate himself with you.

“I think the fastest way to get shut out is to start talking about who you can influence and who you can't influence,” Lukis, a Ballard managing partner who moved to Washington after the election to open the new office, said over breakfast one morning at the Old Ebbitt Grill. “I don't even like the word ‘influence.’ I'm not trying to influence anybody. What I'm trying to do is to have input into the ultimate decision-making process that's being made regarding the issue that we're working on. And I'd just as soon talk to a staffer than I would the secretary, because I think ultimately if you can get the staff to agree with you, 98 percent of the time you're probably going to get the secretary to agree with you.”

If Ballard hadn't helped to elect Trump, it's easy to imagine he might be one of the many Republican lobbyists in Washington who aren't enamored of the president. He's raised money and professed admiration over the years for several Republicans who have been harsh Trump critics: Jeb Bush, John McCain, Mitt Romney. He's occasionally even given to Democrats, including his old friend Crist, who became an independent during his failed Senate campaign in 2010 and is now a Democratic congressman. “Brian is a fairly moderate Republican, I think I would say,” Crist said when I asked him what it was like to be on the other of the partisan divide from Ballard. “So it's fine.” He laughed.

Ballard has taken criticism from Republicans who would have rather seen Hillary Clinton elected than Trump. It's cost him friendships. After the "Access Hollywood" tape came out late in the campaign, he said, "I can recall a very active Republican that I was trying to get to help at an event after that asking me if I was ashamed of myself." No, not at all, he replied. "No one's going to be fooled by electing Donald Trump," he told me. "He is what he is."

If he didn't know Trump, he might have ended up as a Trump critic rather than a supporter, he told me. "But I know him," he said.

Ballard's relationship with Trump isn't all that different from the bonds that hundreds if not thousands of lobbyists in Washington have with members of Congress they used to work for. Like Ballard, many lobbyists help sustain those relationships by giving money and hosting fundraisers for their old bosses' reelection campaigns. The difference is that Ballard's relationship is with the president of United States. Lobbyists and former campaign big shots such as Lewandowski had it particularly easy in the first months of the administration, before John Kelly replaced Priebus as chief of staff and cracked down on outside access to Trump. "You were walking in, you were having dinner," said a lobbyist for one of Ballard's clients, who estimated Ballard talks with Trump every few weeks. "It was like dealing with a Senate office or a small-time governor."

Ballard won't talk about what he does for his clients, for the most part. He made an exception for his work on behalf of Katumbi, the exiled Congolese opposition leader. Katumbi, who fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2016 to avoid being thrown in prison by President Joseph Kabila, hired Ballard to help persuade the Trump administration to pressure Kabila to allow him to return. Ballard, Lukis and Katumbi met with a deputy to Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, in October before Haley traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Haley forcefully called for the country to hold elections this year on her trip.

Not all of Ballard's foreign clients are as sympathetic. Ballard signed a contract with the Turkish government worth \$125,000 a month on May 11, days before Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's security guards beat up peaceful protesters outside Turkey's embassy, according to a Justice Department filing. Another filing shows Ballard met several times with administration officials on Turkey's behalf, including Sean Cairncross, a senior adviser to the White House chief of staff, and Matt Mowers, a State Department official who worked on Trump's campaign.

Domestic lobbying filings don't require the same level of disclosure, and Ballard's are especially lacking in detail. But they give a sense of the scope of his lobbying efforts. Ballard Partners has lobbied nearly two dozen federal agencies, from the Treasury Department to the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the White House, Vice President Mike Pence's office and Congress. Ballard and his partners pulled in

\$550,000 last year lobbying the White House and the Justice Department for the GEO Group, the private-prison operator, which won the administration's first immigrant-detention contract in April, less than three months after signing Ballard. He lobbied the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on behalf of LG, the South Korean electronics manufacturer, and two solar-panel installation companies as the administration considered whether to slap tariffs on imported washing machines and solar panels. And he started lobbying the White House for Crowley Maritime, a Florida shipping company, four days after the administration waived the Jones Act in an effort to speed the delivery of hurricane relief to Puerto Rico. Thomas Crowley, the company's chief executive, told the *Washington Post* at the time that waiving the Jones Act — which requires shipments between U.S. ports to be carried on American-flagged vessels — wouldn't help relief efforts. The Jones Act, Crowley added, “is very important to our company and America's shipping industry.” Trump allowed the waiver to lapse days later.

The staff at Ballard Partners remains small, at least compared with how much money Ballard is pulling in. The firm had just six registered lobbyists handling domestic work in the fourth quarter of 2017, when it took in \$3.6 million. That made it the No. 17 firm in Washington, ahead of many long-established firms, according to a POLITICO analysis of lobbying disclosure filings. Peck Madigan Jones, the No. 16 lobbying firm by revenue, had twice that many lobbyists.

Ballard insists he wants to build a firm that will outlast Trump, but some lobbyists are skeptical that he'll succeed. If Trump leaves before his term is finished or fails to win reelection, “I would imagine there would be significant drop-off” in Ballard's business, a prominent Democratic lobbyist said. “Because it's a straight Trump play.”

Still, Ballard wouldn't be the first state-level lobbyist to make a permanent leap to Washington. The Denver law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, for instance, opened a Washington office in 1995 and is now the No. 2 lobbying shop in town by revenue. Norm Brownstein, the chairman of the firm's board, told me he admires what Ballard has achieved so far, before adding, “I believe as long as [Trump] is president, he will have a great practice.”

Ballard's fundraising prowess means he'll remain valuable to Trump at least through 2020, the lobbyist for one of Ballard's clients told me. Washington lobbyists, of course, have hosted fundraisers and given money as a way of ingratiating themselves with lawmakers for decades. But relatively few lobbyists are raising serious money for Trump, whom many Republicans on K Street freely disparage in private. Ballard is one of only three lobbyists who's a vice chairman of the Republican National Committee's fundraising committee. “He's a ferocious fundraiser. I mean, if that coffee cup could give money,” Wiles told me over coffee one morning, gesturing toward a mug on the table.

Stipanovich, Ballard's old friend in Florida, said he was willing to make a prediction: Ballard, unlike other Trump campaign veterans who have come to Washington, will be in business long after Trump is out of office. "When Trump is gone, Lewandowski might as well buy a bed-and-breakfast in Vermont," Stipanovich said. "But not Brian."



COMMITTEE ACTION

ITEM 5: Review of Public Member Candidates for Term Ending October 31, 2026

SUMMARY:

In March 2023 a Public Member Selection Process was approved and, in accordance with this process, CAC management has solicited applications for the Public Member and Alternates seats with terms ending, October 31, 2026. At the time of this writing, six individuals have expressed an interest in the public member position and have submitted resumes for consideration.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

- Not applicable

COMMITTEE OPTIONS:

- The Executive Committee shall review the information provided by applicants and may interview applicants and/or require additional information to ensure that applicants are in compliance with Commission law and to evaluate each applicant's qualifications for the public member positions
- When the Executive Committee determines that one or more applicants are qualified, it shall recommend to the Board of Directors consideration of such applicants for available public member positions

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Not applicable

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS:

- CAC Public Member Selection Process
- Public Member Resume Submission for:
 - Ben Bowditch
 - Ella Caughey
 - Laura Contreras
 - Maddie Cook
 - Marty Ordman
 - Shawn Peery



PUBLIC MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS

Commission law provides that the Commission Board of Directors shall recommend to the Secretary of Food and Agriculture the appointment of a public member and alternate public member to serve on the Board in accordance with Commission law.

The process to be utilized by the Commission for such action is as follows.

1. Solicit applications (with resumes) which demonstrate expertise in food safety, public health, nutrition, marketing, public education or other relevant experience. Preference for California residents.
2. The Executive Committee shall review the information provided by applicants and may interview applicants and/or require additional information to ensure that applicants are in compliance with Commission law and to evaluate each applicant's qualifications for the public member positions.
3. When the Executive Committee determines that one or more applicants are qualified, it shall recommend to the Board of Directors consideration of such applicants for available public member positions.
4. The Board of Directors shall interview each applicant recommended by the Executive Committee.
5. Upon completion of the process, the Board of Directors may schedule a meeting to consider recommending to the Secretary of Food and Agriculture the appointment of specific applicants to one or both public member positions.

From: [Ben Bowditch](#)
To: [CAC IAF](#)
Subject: California Avocado Commission Board of Directors - Public Member Position
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 11:21:59 AM
Attachments: [Resume202408231041.docx](#)

Hello,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the public member on the California Avocado Commission (CAC) Board of Directors. With the term set to expire in October 2026, I am eager to contribute my expertise in marketing, education, and public service to support the Commission's mission of advancing the California avocado industry.

My background includes significant experience in retail category management, notably during my tenure as Category Manager at Lunds & Byerly's. While in this role, I partnered closely with the California Avocado Commission to execute a highly successful season-long campaign. This initiative featured targeted marketing efforts, engaging sales contests, and consumer education on the unique qualities of California-grown avocados, including Reeds, Gems, and Morro Bay varieties. The collaboration not only elevated brand awareness but also drove measurable sales growth.

Beyond my professional achievements, I bring a deep appreciation for the importance of health and nutrition, public engagement, and sustainable food systems. While I have no financial interests in the avocado industry, my collaborative experience with CAC gives me a unique understanding of its values and goals.

As a Minnesota resident with firsthand experience in supporting California's agriculture from a consumer-focused perspective, I would bring a fresh and diverse viewpoint to the board. My aim is to contribute meaningfully to initiatives that strengthen the industry while promoting the health benefits of avocados to a broader audience.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how my background aligns with the goals of the California Avocado Commission. Please let me know if additional materials or information are needed.

Warm regards,

Ben Bowditch



Ben Bowditch
Associate Category Manager – N&O Grains & Oils

[Redacted]

BEN BOWDITCH

Natural & Organic Ingredient Category Manager

Team Leader | Sr. Account Executive | Produce Buyer | Category Manager

Accomplished Senior Manager with 14+ years of food industry experience.

- ✓ Accomplished Manager with 10+ years of Ingredient buying, retail buying and category management experience and 5+ years of farm management experience.
- ✓ Well-versed in all aspects of the produce industry & organic ingredient category management including developing sourcing strategies, procurement, managing logistics, holistic farm management, shipping, and receiving.
- ✓ Effectively manages several commodities within the organic ingredient & produce category. Leverages industry expertise to develop strategies and perfect the supply chain.
- ✓ Highly skilled team leader who guides and mentors team members to boost overall performance. Provides strategic management to buyers overseeing multiple locations.
- ✓ Collaborative communicator with a reputation for growing long-term client relationships within the industry.
- ✓ Consistently increases profitability and sales through effective contract negotiations, making key decisions that impact the supply chain, and developing innovative pricing strategies.

SKILLS

❖ Team Leadership	❖ Purchasing	❖ Budgeting	❖ Contract Negotiations
❖ Category Management	❖ Coaching & Mentorship	❖ Forecasting	❖ Program Development
❖ Pricing Strategy	❖ Account Management	❖ Sales Growth	❖ Crop Management
❖ Merchandising	❖ Building Relationships	❖ Supply Chain Management	❖ Risk Mitigation
❖ Team Building	❖ Holistic Farm Management	❖ Cost Evaluations	❖ Process Improvement

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

General Mills – Minneapolis, MN

2023 –Present

Natural & Organic Grains, Fats/Oils, & Non-Sucrose Sweeteners Category Manager

- Implemented a structured contracting process for organic wheat procurement.
- Organized a comprehensive review of the contracting process, resulting in a 2.5MM increase in Holistic Margin Management for Organic Wheat.
- Pioneered a program aimed at utilizing starch from cover crops to develop sweeteners, thereby substituting tapioca and rice syrups.
- Managed organic grain purchasing, overseeing 70,000 acres of regenerative farmland.
- Worked in conjunction with mills and growers to assess regenerative scores through grower surveys and technical support.
- Led a charter to add perennial wheat grass flour to heritage cereal creating new markets for growers to plant for.
- Built and enabled productivity pipeline for a 2Y roadmap in an inflationary market.

Produce Category Manager

- Prioritized work to effectively manage multiple commodities including berries, asparagus, hot house, melons, stone fruit, Southern vegetables, tropical fruit, and garlic.
- Oversaw a high-performing team of 3 buyers for 29 stores, providing daily guidance and mentorship to the team. Trained and coached 2 new buyers with no prior experience.
- Boosted sales and reduced inventory turnover by establishing sourcing strategies with supply chain partners.
- Encouraged consistent growth by developing short and long-term retail pricing strategies to align sales with in-store promotions.
- Increased berry sales by 32% within 4 years by focusing on quality and proactively participating in store checks.
- Analyzed category performance to uncover new opportunities to improve the supply chain and minimize risks.
- Achieved gross profit goals for the department by carefully conducting cost evaluations and closely monitoring daily pricing changes.

C&S Wholesale Grocers – Minneapolis, MN**2013 –2019****SR Account Executive****2017 - 2019**

- Promoted to a senior-level role managing all perishable categories after success as a Sr. Produce Buyer.
- Served as a liaison and managed the relationship between C&S and Target grocery teams.
- Collaborated with the C&S senior leadership team and Target to enhance ad performance, develop sales and service strategies, maximize inventory efficiency, and forecast future demand.
- Increased customer satisfaction by adding an on-site merchant team at Target headquarters.

SR Produce Buyer**2013 - 2017**

- Established berry, asparagus, and tropical commodity procurement strategies to optimize the supply chain within the Southeast United States territory.
- Consistently achieved up to \$1M in weekly sales by planning, implementing, and optimizing programs with internal partners and vendors.
- Created an innovative communication tool to help decrease shrinkage for delicate commodities.
- Streamlined operations and minimized losses through effective inventory management.
- Maximized profitability by negotiating spot-buy pricing.

Isabelle Farm – Lafayette, CO**2008 –2013****Farm Manager**

- Oversaw all daily leadership responsibilities for the family-run farm, including guiding a team of 25+ employees across multiple sites, managing harvest crews, selling produce on-site, planning seed orders, budgeting, scheduling deliveries, and building relationships with local businesses.
 - Partnered with leadership to strategically plan and manage the annual budget for the farm.
 - Established and fostered long-term relationships with key clients and local businesses.
 - Defined expectations by writing SOP guidelines for harvest, post-harvest, and cold-chain for a variety of fruits and vegetables prior to sale and distribution.
 - Encouraged consistent business growth, achieving a 600% sales increase, and expanded the farm from 2 to 180 acres within 5 years.
 - Collaborated with a team to develop a successful CSA Program and Wholesale Program.
-

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, the University of Minnesota Duluth

Football Team Captain, 2005

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Microsoft Office, Microsoft Excel, Foodlink, Mobius, Biceps, Terra Data, Data Query, Hyperion, Oracle, Micro Strategy, SAP,

COMMODITIES

Organic Grains, Organic Fats & Oils, Organic Non-Sucrose Sweeteners, Berries, Melons, Grapes, Tropicals (Hispanic Miami/Homestead), Avocados, Stone Fruit, Garlic, Organic Western Vegetables, Southeastern Vegetables, Mexican Vegetables

AWARDS

Above and Beyond Winner, C&S Wholesale Grocers, 2014 & 2018

Ben Bowditch | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/benbowditch> | Page 2 of 2

From: [Ella Caughey](#)
To: [April Aymami](#)
Subject: Re: Application for board
Date: Tuesday, December 10, 2024 7:53:05 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Ella Caughey Resume-2.pdf](#)

Hi April,

Thank you very much for accepting my application, I have attached it to this email.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Ella Caughey
[REDACTED]

On Tue, Dec 10, 2024 at 10:25 AM April Aymami <aaymami@avocado.org> wrote:

Hi Ella,

Apologies for the delayed response. Yes, please go ahead and submit your before this Thursday.

April Aymami

Director of Industry Affairs and Operations

aaymami@avocado.org

12 Mauchly, Suite L

Irvine, California 92618

T. 949.341.1955 x118



From: Ella Caughey <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Monday, December 9, 2024 8:06 AM

To: CAC IAF <cac.iaf@avocado.org>

Subject: Application for board

Hi,

My name is Ella Caughey, I am very interested in applying to the available position. I understand that the deadline was Friday, would there be a chance that you would take my late application?

Let me know if you have any questions and I can send my resume over to you.

Thank you for your time,

Ella Caughey

ELLA CAUGHEY

SUMMARY

Inspired by a strong commitment to agriculture, I am focused on expanding my expertise through hands-on learning and professional development. I am eager to collaborate with a dynamic team and aim to drive sustainable solutions and advocate for the growth of the agricultural industry.



[Redacted]



[Redacted]



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ella-caughey-297000192/>

EDUCATION

Bachelors of Science Agricultural Communications

California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo | San Luis Obispo, CA

- Graduated 06/2024

Associate of Science Business Administration

Santa Rosa Junior College
Santa Rosa, CA

- Aug 2018 - June 2021

SKILLS

- Time management
- Flexible and adaptive
- Critical thinking
- Leadership
- Project management
- Curious
- Adobe (InDesign, Lightroom, Premiere Rush, Photoshop)

ACHIEVEMENTS/CLUBS

IFPA- Pack Family Career Pathways Student

Anaheim
October 2023

Agricultural Business Managemnt Club/ NAMA

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
2022-2024

WORK EXPERIENCE

David Oppenhiemer & Company (Oppy)

Chino Hills, CA

Sales and Marketing Associate

September 2024 - Present

- Conducts thorough market research to identify trends, customer needs, and competitor strategies, providing insights to drive targeted marketing campaigns.
- Assists in generating and nurturing sales leads through outreach, follow-ups, and maintaining strong relationships with potential and existing customers.
- Collaborates in the creation, implementation, and monitoring of marketing campaigns, ensuring alignment with sales goals and company objectives.

The Nunes Comapny

Salinas, CA

Food Safety Intern

June 2023-September 2023

- Tested produce commodities to assess chemical properties and evaluate compliance with both production standards and federal requirements.
- Conducted internal audits and performed plant inspections.
- Worked successfully with diverse group of coworkers to accomplish goals and address issues related to our products and services.
- Recorded or compiled test results to prepare graphs, charts or reports.

Corey Manning

Healdsburg, CA

Ranch Manager

February 2022 - August 2022

- Planted and harvested 5,000 pounds of produce for local food insecure families.
- Allocated resources to respond to insect infestation, drought and fire.
- Grew over eight different plant species organically.

Sonoma Academy

Santa Rosa, CA

Alumni Engagement Outreach

November 2017 - July 2018

- Posted and updated weekly content on the company's website and social media outlets.
- Wrote social media posts, analyzed engagement through Facebook analytics, and promoted school opportunities.

Activities

- Florence Study Abroad
- Ceres Community Project Volunteer
- Farm to Pantry Volunteer
- Swim club

From: [Lau Gmail pers.](#)
To: [CAC IAF](#)
Subject: Application for Public Member Position on the California Avocado Commission Board
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 10:05:05 AM
Attachments: [CV Job US 2024 2. PDF.pdf](#)

Dear members of The California Avocado Commission board of directors,

I am interest in joining the California Avocado Commission (CAC) Board of Directors as a public member. As someone who is deeply passionate about agriculture and community advocacy, I am eager to contribute my skills and perspectives to support the growth and sustainability of California's avocado industry.

With a background in different areas as production, and trends analysis. I have cultivated a strong understanding of strategic development. I believe this expertise aligns with CAC's mission to maximize grower returns by enhancing premium brand positioning for California avocados and improving grower sustainability.

As a prospective public member, I am committed to:

- **Contributing to Strategic Decision-Making:** I aim to support initiatives that drive the growth and sustainability of California's avocado industry, ensuring its resilience for future generations.
- **Collaborating with Stakeholders:** Working closely with growers, industry experts, and fellow board members to align our efforts with CAC's mission and achieve shared goals.
- **Representing Public Interests:** I am dedicated to ensuring that policies and programs reflect the values and expectations of the broader community.

I look forward the opportunity to discuss my qualifications further and explore how I can contribute to the CAC Board's impactful work. Please let me know if there is any additional information required or if there are next steps in the application process.

Thank you for considering my application.

Warm regards,
Laura Contreras

LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laura-sanchez-91b138128/>

Laura Contreras

Oxnard, CA 93030

Summary

Committed professional in International Management and Foreign Trade with proven history of responsibility and teamwork, through the five and a half years of work managing logistics, international dispatch of cargo, production, sales and administration. I am aiming to leverage the knowledge and dynamic skill set combined with teamwork to bring valuable results to the company.

Skills

- Project Management
- Strategic thinking
- Decision making
- Documentation and reporting
- Customs documentation
- Logistics coordination
- Adaptability
- Attention to detail
- Customer relationship
- Prioritization and multitasking
- Negotiation and sales

Experience

Replenishment Analyst | Westfalia Fruit – Oxnard, USA. – 06/2023-07/2024

- Approval and control of fruit and service invoices of each container imported. Create Purchase orders and documentation of fruit. Inventory and Procurement activities. Use of Produce PRO system.

International Commerce and Project Manager | Süd Nord Trade – Colima, Mexico – 09/2019-04/2023

- Management of production, logistics and customs clearance. Assistance in different areas of the company as sourcing, sales, and management of personnel. Conduct projects for the company for new products/markets.

Deputy Manager of Foreign Trade and Admin. | IBEV Casa Tequilera –S.L.– Gdl. Mexico– 09/2018-08/2019

- Coordination of customs clearance and logistics for export shipments.
- Create shipping documentation for the customs broker agent.
- Control of banks, transfers, control of supplier and customer invoices.

Export account manager | C&E Agentes Aduanales – Colima, Mexico – 03/2018-08/2018

- Omniflife and Seytú customer account manager. In addition to coordinating and conducting full customs clearance of all its exports to South America.

THD International Bureau Assistance | Technische Hochschule Deggendorf – Germany –03/2016-11/2016

- International and national procedures management for foreign students in Germany.
- Assistance in intercultural training and registration in government institutions and admission to the university for the students.

Education and training

Technische Hochschule Deggendorf, Germany | Bachelor of International Management.

Sep 2015 – Dic 2021

University from Colima, Mexico | Bachelor of Foreign Trade.

Aug 2013 - May 2018

MEXIBERICA Spain | Export to Spain Course.

Nov 2020 - Nov 2020

Languages

English:

Full professional

Spanish:

Native/ Bilingual

German:

B1

From: [Maddie Cook](#)
To: [April Aymami](#)
Cc: [Ken Melban](#)
Subject: RE: CAC Public Member Announcement
Date: Friday, December 6, 2024 8:29:40 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[MCook Resume.docx.pdf](#)

Hi April,

Please see my resume attached. I am happy to remain on the board should the team choose to have me.

Thank you,



Maddie Cook

Account Manager, FPGS

[Tree Top, Inc](#)



Maddie Cook

- Clovis, CA

Experience:

Tree Top LLC, Remote

Account Manager, Grower Relations (July 2022 - Present)

- Ensure food safety adherence of all designated suppliers
- Communicate with suppliers and internal teams to ensure on-time delivery of fruit
- Cross-functionally collaborate to make business decisions, and own the results

Meridian Fine Foods, Fresno, CA

Account Manager (July 2021-Present)

- Maintain and grow relationships with new and existing customer accounts
- Assist in logistics, accounting, and marketing departments as needed
- Coordinate with suppliers in Central and Baja Mexico to accurately presale anticipated inventory

Prima Wawona (Gerawan Farming), Cutler, CA

Sales Representative & Analyst (May 2019-July 2021)

- Use Excel and BI software to analyze data and present conclusions
- Assist in selecting marketing materials that influence customer/consumer behavior
- Lead relationships with multiple regional accounts, delivering quantitative growth

Fresno Madera YFR, Fresno, CA

Social Media Coordinator (Feb 2020-Present)

- Develop copyright that maintains an authentic social brand to influence behavior
- Create engaging visual content using Canva and Adobe Illustrator
- Seek out member feedback and revise the marketing approach appropriately

Skills:

Self-starter

Eager to Learn

Authentic

Creative Problem Solving

Negotiation

Project Management

Tenacious

Interpersonal Communication

Independent

Microsoft Proficiency

Agile

Food Handlers Certificate

Education:

California State University, Fresno

Ag. Business BS Degree 2020

Vice President of Sigma Alpha 2019

Ag. Ambassador 2018

Shasta College

Ag. Business and Sustainable Ag. Sciences AS Degrees

Degrees with honors 2018

From: [Marty Ordman](#)
To: [CAC IAF](#)
Subject: Public member for board of directors of CAC
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 1:49:20 PM
Attachments: [Marty Ordman Resume 12-3-24.pdf](#)

Dear CAC Executive Committee:

I'd like to apply for the public member position on the California Avocado Commission board. I had a long career at Dole Food Company in marketing and communications. I know the produce, supermarket and food service industries very well. I served as Chairman of the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) and was on their executive committee for many years.

I am currently a marketing consultant doing work with a variety of food companies and the Captain Planet Foundation. Also I am on the board of Nichols Farms, a family owned pistachio and almond company in the central valley.

I am familiar with the CAC, worked with some of your past marketing associates through PBH and have always thought your organization was a leader in the produce industry. I would be honored to serve on the board.

Attached is my resume.

Sincerely,

Marty Ordman

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates.

From: [Shawn Peery](#)
To: [CAC IAF](#)
Subject: California Avocado Commission board of director application
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 12:21:36 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Shawn Peery Resume 2024.doc](#)

To Whom it May Concern:

Good afternoon and Happy Tuesday,

Attached you will find my application and resume for the California Avocado Board position that will open in 2025.

Just a few notes on my background.

I have been in the Produce Industry over 39 years- with my entire career based on retail grocery stores, from store Produce Clerk/Manager, Division Store Support Produce Sales Manager, to my current Position Manager as National Vice President Produce- leading the Albertson's Companies Produce Team.

I am very passionate about growing Avocado Sales, units, and consumption; I started the first ripe Avocado store program at Albertson in OR in the 90's, ordering ahead and pre-conditioning to offer ready to eat Avocados on display, stickered with Ripe Ready to eat stickers on only ripe fruit. Within the next few years, the company had started expanding this ripening Avocado program to other stores. As a Sales Manager of the NW Division of Albertsons, I moved the divisions Avocado program to carry 2 sizes bulk, bags, and Organics, meeting each customer's needs for growing Avocado consumption. As I moved to my current role 7 years ago, we have expanded the 2-size program, bags, and organics Avocado Program to a National Strategy. Under my leadership, we have changed our merchandising or pre-conditioned Avocados- targeting stage 4 ripe fruit at store delivery from our DC.

I am also very passionate about Produce and increasing Produce Consumption in the United States- healthy eating is so critical to healthy and happy lifestyles; Avocados play a key role in healthy eating, and we have a long way to go to get Produce consumption to the USDA My Plate recommendations.

As my career has been focused on serving the customer/consumer in the Fresh Produce Industry, I feel I would be a great fit for the California Avocado Commission Board. This industry has been very good to me and my family, and I want to give back to the industry by serving on positions that I can help shape the future of the Produce Industry and the access the American Consumer has to fresh Produce for years/decades to come. I realize that I am not currently a California resident- however I do have 500+ stores in California and am frequently in the market visiting these stores.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to speaking with you about this opportunity.

Shawn Peery



Vice President Produce

National Merchandising Team



*Locally Great
Nationally Strong*

Warning: All e-mail sent to this address will be received by the corporate e-mail system, and is subject to archival and review by someone other than the recipient. This e-mail may contain proprietary information and is intended only for the use of the intended recipient(s). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient(s), you are notified that you have received this message in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately.

SHAWN PEERY

Boise, ID 83709

VICE PRESIDENT PRODUCE

Executive in the Produce Industry

Proven leadership with over 38 years in the produce industry, enhancing sales, operations, and merchandising strategies. Demonstrated success in driving profitability and expanding sales and market share.

Offering the following unique qualifications:

- Extensive experience as Vice President in Produce, overseeing 2200+ stores and generating over \$8 billion in sales revenue.
- Robust background in Division/Corporate Produce Sales Management across multiple states and distribution centers for over 15 years.
- Innovative brokerage management, establishing a strong presence in a well-established geographic market within a year.
- Expertise in food manufacturing with a focus on Business & P&L Management/Sales for more than 3 years.
- Diverse retail Produce Management experience, ranging from low to high volume stores, spanning a decade.
- Exceptional drive and resourcefulness, excelling in dynamic and demanding environments.
- Collaborative skills that enhance team efforts towards growth and effective P&L management.
- Visionary leadership with a track record of surpassing set goals through innovative strategies.
- Redefining merchandising standards and solving operational challenges with creative solutions.
- Marketing acumen combined with technical skills, business savvy, and operational knowledge.
- Established ability to develop and maintain strong partnerships with Produce Supply Partners.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Spearheaded the "Distinct in Fresh" strategy, transforming the National Fresh Merchandising Team's approach to marketing and merchandising.
- Guided the National Merchandising team through a pivotal shift to the "Locally Great, Nationally Strong" business model, fostering long-term partnerships with growers.
- Drove significant sales growth during the first three years post the Safeway/Albertsons merger, leading to sustained item movement growth following the retail investment initiative.
- Championed sales growth at Albertsons LLC post-acquisition from Supervalu, notably enhancing Organic and Fresh Cut Sales to become a top performer in the company.
- Directed a pricing initiative for the Food Service and Value-Added Sales channel at Litehouse, Inc., achieving results that surpassed budgeted profit goals by over 20%.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

THE ALBERTSONS COMPANIES, Boise, Idaho	2013-current
National Vice President Produce	2022-current
Vice President Produce and Floral- Retail Support	2017-2022
Division Produce Sales Manager, Albertsons Companies	2013-2017
APEX SALES AND MARKETING, Portland OR	2012 – 2013
NW Division Director	
LITEHOUSE, INC., Sandpoint, Idaho	2007 – 2011
Vice President Business Development	2008-2011
Director of Integrated Business Management	2007- 2008
ALBERTSONS, INC., Boise, Idaho	1987 – 2007
National Category Manager- Produce	2005- 2007
Divisional Category Manager- Produce	2003- 2005
Assistant Sales Manager- Produce & Floral	2000- 2003
Store Produce Manager	1987- 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formulated and executed a 3–5-year strategic plan for department/category growth, enhancing market position. ▪ Championed diversity and inclusion, focusing on the development of future leaders within the organization. ▪ Developed a comprehensive Corporate Merchandising Strategy, incorporating market entry strategies and a toolkit for Produce Equipment Merchandising to optimize department layouts and reduce costs through economies of scale. ▪ Successfully overhauled the Northwest Division's Produce Operations, significantly improving merchandising, sales, and profitability, resulting in a sales increase of over 50% within three years. ▪ Led the expansion of brokerage services in the Northwest, focusing on building relationships, as well as recruiting, training, and managing Territory Managers. ▪ Conducted thorough reviews of business opportunities, assessing ROI potential and providing strategic recommendations to the executive team. ▪ Managed customer service and sales departments, ensuring high standards of customer satisfaction were met, thereby boosting sales and profitability. ▪ Designed and implemented effective sales, marketing, and promotional strategies to drive business growth. ▪ Initiated and communicated corporate-wide initiatives, ensuring consistent implementation across the nation. ▪ Innovated and recommended new departmental fixture concepts, delivering schematic designs tailored to various brand identities. ▪ Provided training and mentorship to employees transitioning into management roles, fostering professional development. ▪ Addressed and resolved operational challenges, maintaining strict adherence to corporate policies and guidelines. 	

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE INCLUDES:

Extensive 30-year tenure with Albertsons, Inc., showcasing a strong commitment to the company. Progressive career growth from a produce clerk to various management roles, demonstrating adaptability and leadership. Proven track record of delivering consistently positive results, contributing to personal advancement and company success. Experience across diverse geographical locations in Oregon and Idaho, indicating a broad understanding of regional market dynamics.

AWARDS

IFPA Retail Merchant Innovation Awards Winner for the 400+ store category 2023

Recognized as a "Packer 25 2021" top 25 Produce Executives by the Packer Division Presidents Award in 2014 at Albertsons.

Corporate \$78MM Idea award- for creating the Signature 3/\$10 Bowl strategy
Received Highest Award for Achievement and Sales Presentation Champion at Dale Carnegie Leadership Training.

Division Presidents Award in 2002 and Sales & Profit Dollar Award in Q1 2004 at Albertsons.

Recognized as a "Top 100 Retail Produce Executives" by Food & Beverage Executive Magazine.

Trained and mentored 100+ Produce Managers, multiple Produce Sales Managers, Vice Presidents, Directors, Category Managers and Ad Specialists.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Associates of Art in Business Management, Axia College of the University of Phoenix

- Cornell University Produce Executive and Leadership Training
- Today's Manager, Tomorrow's Leader Course- Portland State University
- Successful Negotiation – Albertsons
- Ed Foreman's Successful Life Course – Leadership/Public Speaking
- Management for Inspired Performance – Albertsons
- Divisional Sales Manager Training – Albertsons
- How to Build a Better Team – Insight Systems
- Dale Carnegie Leadership and Sales Training

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

IFPA Retail Committee

IFPA Political Advisory Committee

Board of Directors, Bonner Business Center

WIIN Board Member

Board of Directors, ADA Little League Softball

Oregon Food Bank Volunteer

Dale Carnegie Graduate Assistant

Idaho Food Bank Volunteer

Idaho Botanical Gardens Volunteer

Sandy, OR Girls Softball Volunteer

MARTY ORDMAN

Malibu, CA 90265

SUMMARY

Award winning marketing executive with over twenty-five years of consumer products experience in a Fortune 500 brand management setting. Expertise in cross divisional marketing development and corporate communications for a nationally recognized global corporation. Proven success in creating strategic solutions and developing new marketing techniques to address today's social driven media priorities, integrated across advertising, promotions, digital and public relations.

- Multi-media Campaign Success
- Brand Development
- Global Marketing Communications
- Licensing & Contract Negotiations
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Cross Functional Team Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MSO CONSULTING

2013 – PRESENT

Worked with Dole Packaged Foods, Captain Planet Foundation, PGA Tour, Tiger Woods Foundation, New Frontier Foods, Ruby Rockets and Nichols Farms on various marketing, communications, and event programs.

DOLE FOOD COMPANY, WESTLAKE VILLAGE, CA

1985 – 2013

Vice President, Marketing & Communications

2006 -- 2013

Reported to the President & CEO, with 4 direct reports and 12 team members and an annual budget of \$2.7 million. Responsible for global communications, brand development and digital marketing assets across eight operating divisions. Managed consumer center and test kitchen with senior advisory role for the Dole Nutrition Institute and Corporate Social Responsibility teams. During tenure at company revenues grew from \$1.4 to \$7.2 billion.

Worldwide Brand Development

- Directed successful revitalization and global repositioning of the Dole brand resulting in a 20% increase in same product sales and a 30% increase in brand awareness.
- Led brand repositioning executed across three operating divisions in four worldwide regions, integrated with internal communications, advertising, promotion, digital and collateral.
- Successfully drove licensee partner agreements (PepsiCo, Target Foods, and Snow Dairy) to convert to new Dole positioning.
- Led successful product launch of Dole Fruit "N Juice bars in highly competitive frozen novelty category.

Corporate Communications & Public Relations

- Launched a proactive corporate communications program highlighting Dole's accomplishments and generating over 400 million earned media impressions over a 3-year period.
- Appointed by CEO to act as worldwide Dole spokesperson for corporation handling crisis communications for recalls, litigation, activist attacks and on-going communications.
- Significant partnership with inhouse general counsel on lobbying efforts to effectively and successfully mitigate potential harmful global legal actions.
- Successfully teamed with product marketing groups and Dole Nutrition Institute to optimize public relations programs that earned over 100 million media impressions.

Corporate Social Responsibility

- Key member of company's global Corporate Social Responsibility team charged with proactively communicating initiatives and activities to various stakeholders.
- Spearheaded annual visits by NGO's and media to operations in Latin America to showcase environmental and labor programs.
- Managed company's award-winning nutrition education program directed to consumers, retailers and educators. Materials distributed to over 20,000 teachers and millions of children.
- Responsible for company's charitable giving with emphasis on nutrition and health organizations.

Partnership Marketing

- Developed multi-tiered marketing programs with a variety of high visibility entertainment entities including Disney, Fox, Universal, Mattel and Microsoft resulting in a 15-25% promotional incremental uplift in sales.
- Enriched and advanced the multi-million dollar Disney/Dole relationship through five renegotiations in the U.S. and led international marketing teams in Europe and Asia to complete similar deals.
- Created and drove dozens of promotional programs with high-end consumer product brands such as Danon, Crayola, Kraft, Kikkoman, Oster and Tropicana.
- Managed marketing relationship with dessert appliance maker (Yonanas), integrating Dole brand into package design, on-line and retail programs in non-food outlets.

Celebrity & Event Marketing

- Led Dole's multi-year sponsorships of the Tiger Woods World Challenge and the Shark Shootout hosted by Greg Norman, increasing brand positioning in sports world.
- Managed Dole's successful multimillion dollar four-year relationship with Kenny Rogers including advertising development, North American concert tour, in-store promotions, PR and personal appearances.
- Led annual sponsorship of "Easter at The White House" showcasing Dole's continuing prominent role in expanding children's nutritional education and healthy new products.
- Developed comprehensive marketing strategy to showcase company's healthy products to fitness enthusiasts by negotiating and raising high-impact product brand exposure at significant long distance running events including the NY, LA, Boston, Honolulu, Big Sur Marathons and the Rock 'N Roll running series.

Digital Marketing

- Led the successful revitalization of the Dole website (dole.com) twice (2007 and 2013) resulting in a dramatic 20% increase in views and uplift in recognized brand stature in social media outlets.
- Responsible for strategy and launch of Facebook presence, resulting in over 800,000 new friends.
- Implemented new and innovative Digital Asset Management system resulting in increased company-wide operational efficiencies.
- Developed first-ever Blogger Communications program resulting in 2+ million impressions over a three-year period and culminating in a breakthrough annual summit.

Prior Dole Positions

Vice President, Marketing Services	1999-2006
Director, Sales Promotions & Special Events	1992-1999
Manager, Sales Promotion & Special Events, Dole Packaged Foods	1987-1992
Brand Manager, Dole Frozen Desserts, Dole Packaged Foods	1985-1987

FLAIR COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY, CHICAGO, IL & SAN FRANCISCO, CA 1981 – 1985

Leading marketing communications agency with Fortune 500 clients with offices in five cities.

Senior Account Executive working on Kellogg's, Westinghouse, Gerber, Kodak and Stroh's Beer.

EDUCATION

BBA Marketing, University of Wisconsin

AFFILIATIONS & AWARDS

Recipient of the 2012 Communicator Award for Digital Annual Report
Chairman, Produce for Better Health Foundation

Member, Nutrition Council, United Fresh Produce Association

Member, Brand Management Committee, Association National Advertisers