



2024 CAC GENERAL ELECTION PRODUCER DISCLOSURE OF AFFILIATIONS

I declare that I am engaged, within this state, in the business of producing or causing to be produced avocados for market through a legal entity (individual ownership, partnership, corporation, or other) which is not also involved in the handling of avocados, and that my **grove** is located in California Avocado Commission District Number 2 (Refer to enclosed **Grove District Zip Code List**)

I **own** the following number of planted avocado acres in California 14 and derive a portion of my gross avocado industry income from producing or causing to be produced avocados. I also have a financial interest in groves located in District(s) _____.

I **manage** the following number of planted avocado acres in California _____ and derive a portion of my gross avocado industry income from producing or causing to be produced avocados. I also have a financial interest in groves located in District(s) _____.

I **pack** my fruit with the following handlers: Index Fresh _____; _____; _____; _____.

In addition, I am also involved in the avocado industry in the following capacities (check all that apply):

- Handler – Owner/Partner
- Handler – Officer/Director
- Handler – Employee
- Holder of a personal financial interest in the production of avocados outside of the United States.
- Holder of a personal financial interest in a handling operation that imports fruit from outside of the United States.

Please briefly describe that financial interest and specify the location of the out-of-country operation.

Stockholder and director of Index Fresh which imports avocados from Mexico, Peru and other countries.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is a complete, true and correct explanation of each of my affiliations with the avocado industry. I understand that this form may be made available upon request, or reproduced and included with election information mailed to eligible voters.

PRINT NAME: John Cornell

SIGNATURE:  **DATE:** 8/26/2024

MUST ARRIVE AT CAC ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 26, 2024 VIA MAIL, FAX OR EMAIL

12 Mauchly, Suite L, Irvine, CA 92618-6305

FAX: (949) 208-3503 EMAIL AAYMAMI@AVOCADO.ORG



2024 CAC GENERAL ELECTION PRODUCER CANDIDATE STATEMENT

(Please Print or Type All Information)

NAME: John Cornell _____

GROVE CITY/CITIES: Temecula, CA _____

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS:

This form will be included with the ballots to inform growers about your qualifications. *Please limit your statement to the space provided.*

Avocado Grower's \$50,000 Question

This year, the average California avocado grower is facing over \$10,000 in crop assessments, most of which funds the California Avocado Commission's (CAC) marketing programs. Every five years, we have the opportunity to decide if we want to continue paying these assessments and keep the CAC running. If assessments stay the same, that's more than \$50,000 per grower over the next five years. We need to ask ourselves: Is this investment truly worth it? As growers, it's crucial to consider whether the CAC's budgeting priorities and strategies align with our interests or if they favor handlers and importers who benefit regardless of where the fruit originates. Does our \$50,000 investment bring a return that benefits us?

Take, for example, CAC's stance on California state bills AB 710 and AB 865, which were designed to level the playing field for California growers and protect consumers by ensuring foreign fruit sold in California meets the same standards California growers must meet. AB 710 specifically mentioned avocados, but instead of supporting these bills, the CAC opposed AB 710. One staff member even pressured the bill's sponsor to remove the word "avocados," which the sponsor did. CAC later took a neutral position on AB 865—without consulting the board—claiming that supporting it might strain relationships with California retailers. These actions raise serious questions about whether the CAC is truly fighting for California growers or prioritizing the interests of retailers and importers.

When considering the return on investment, think of the tens of millions spent for many years on the CAC marketing campaign, which centered on the idea that California avocados are superior simply because "CA" is in both "California" and "Avocado." If this is the best they can do, it's no surprise that many of us question the value of CAC's advocacy. This message, along with the minimal results, is not only laughable but a waste of our hard-earned money.

But is it hopeless? Certainly not. For example, the current rules allow the entire CAC board to be filled with non-assessment-paying managers who don't grow avocados, creating conflicts of interest that compromise their ability to advocate for growers. Currently many board seats are occupied by these non-growers. If we elect non-conflicted real growers to the board, we can ensure that our voices are heard and that the CAC is working for us. This will require a careful audit of our voting process and a concerted effort to make sure your needs are being met. There are many other steps a properly seated board could take to better advocate for California avocado growers. But to get there, we need to elect the right people.

We can do better. Vote now. Vote for your needs. If things haven't changed by next year when your referendum ballot arrives, reflect on what should have been done and what actually happened, and decide whether the CAC is truly worth your \$50,000.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is a complete, true and correct explanation of my qualifications. I understand that this form shall be reproduced and included with election information mailed to eligible voters.

SIGNATURE:  _____ DATE: 8/26/2024 _____

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