

**California State Board of Food & Agriculture
Uses of Commodity Specific Assessments Resolutions**

Whereas, the Senate Budget sub-committee 2 based upon a recommendation of the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), asked the department to examine the separate and decentralized collection and expenditure of assessments by commodity boards.

Whereas, California farmers and ranchers invest \$180.8 million of producer dollars for commodity specific marketing boards, councils and commissions,

Whereas, these funds are collected only after the assessment payers have consented to the program and assessment limits and only for the purposes of promotion, research and product development and only as specifically appropriated by boards elected from among the assessment payers.

Whereas, this feature of consent of the assessment payer is a fundamental aspect of the 70 year social contract between farmers and their government,

Whereas, the Marketing Act of 1937 and Division 22 of the Food and Agricultural Code which governs California's 54 separate market orders, councils and commissions would be fundamentally altered were these assessments redirected by the action of a budget committee or the Budget Act.

Whereas, these statutes mandate and authorize marketing programs, not pest management programs.

Whereas, the inspections funded by commodity boards are about product to be shipped from California, rather than about pests accompanying product being shipped into California.

Whereas, this centralized collection and appropriation by the department for pest eradication, prevention or control purposes would not be fair and equitable to all boards as many are not affected by exotic pests.

Whereas, those who originate the problem would pay nothing to rectify the problem.

Whereas, the assessment payer would no longer have a voice over how their specific commodity board dollars are expended.

BE IT RESOLVED,

1) That the State Board of Food and Agriculture actively and strongly opposes the centralized collection and expenditure of now separate commodity board assessments by the department and appropriated to fund the department's pest prevention, exclusion and control activities

2) That boards, commissions and council's funds should be collected with referendum vote of producer organizations that in turn have a voice in how their specific dollars are spent. The proposed change would fundamentally alter 70 years of commodity boards and would jeopardize their future.

Subscribed
Helen Lopez, Executive Director

Approved April 26, 2006