

To Secretary Kawamura

I intend to attend the Sacramento listening session and I would like to speak to the panel. Please include these notes in the written record.

My name is David Visher and I am the **Program Manager in California for the Food Alliance**. We are a non-profit organization with a mission to create market incentives for socially and environmentally responsible agricultural practices. Food Alliance operates a sustainable agriculture certification program for producers and processors interested in using 'sustainability' and related claims to differentiate and add value to food products, and to protect and enhance brands.

My **vision** for 2030 is a California that is not only the world leader in efficient food production, but also the leader in sustainable agriculture. Just as we are now the world model for production efficiency, in 2030 our agriculture will be the most environmentally sound, socially just, and profitable region in the world. We are almost there now with our strict environmental and labor regulation, our innovative and sophisticated producers, our infrastructure, and the resources of the University of California. Our people and the world's people demand third party sustainably produced food and our agricultural industry is set to provide it.

We have many **challenges** and I have no doubt at all that our agricultural industry can rise to them, but there are a few we must pay particular attention to. As our industry reacts to the market demand for sustainably produced food we have to defend our credibility against "greenwashing", or marketing claims like "natural" that have no real meaning. We need to certify and prove that our product is sustainable with a clear set of standards supported by a third party inspection program, but this cannot be a top down, one size fits all, regulatory burden. Producers and processors must be able to choose a standard that gives them a market incentive to certify, not be compelled by government or an overwhelmingly powerful buyer to adopt standards that are not accompanied by an increase in profit. Food Alliance and several other organizations offer third party certification. The CDFR and the USDA, and ANSI should stay out of it and let the market decide.

In 2030 the **public perception** of California agriculture will once again be that our food is the safest and cleanest in the world but now it is also the most green, the people who helped grow it are treated fairly, our food supply is secure, and our growers prosperous.

Thank you.

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David Visher
California Program Manager

Food Alliance