

**MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE-
SMALL SCALE PRODUCER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(ALL MEETINGS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC)**

Location: Via Zoom Webinar

Contact: Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor

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Sacramento, CA

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MEETING MINUTES December 5th, 2024

Item No.

(I) Welcome and Introductions

Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor opening the meeting with Committee introductions and CDFA staff introductions and Chair Miller called the official meeting to order after introductions and roll call.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Veronica Mazariegos
Anna Nakamura-Knight
Justin Miller
Kerry McGrath
Lovepreet Kapur
Josefina Lara Chavez
Luis Elizondo
Patrick Mitchell

Absent:

Beverly McKinney
Wendy Kornberg

(II) CALL TO ORDER: Committee Chair Justin Miller

Committee Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 1:12pm.

(III) ACTION ITEM: Approval of August 2024 Meeting Minutes

Member Kerry McGrath motioned to approve the minutes of the prior meeting of the Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee. Member Patrick Mitchell seconded the motion.

Approval of minutes: All present committee members approved the meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Public comment: None.

(IV) DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A) BIPOC PRODUCER ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE:

CDFA BIPOC Producer Committee Chair Hung Doan provided an overview of discussion and agenda items from the most recent CDFA BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee meeting held on December 4th, 2024.

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None.

(B) BUDGET UPDATE:

Thea Rittenhouse, CDFA Farm Equity Advisor, provided a general update on the timeline for the upcoming budget announcement on January 10th 2025.

Additionally, Ms. Rittenhouse reviewed the preliminary overview of new and existing programs funded through the Proposition 4, Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, which was passed by voters in the November election.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None

C) CDFA CUSP Program Update:

CDFA grant program analyst Logan Dreher provided an overview of expanded scenarios for extreme weather disaster funding within the CUSP program. Committee members asked for clarification on how the solicitation for TA providers and administrative overhead will work, given the new funding is only for direct grants, whereas in the past there was separate funding for technical assistance (TA). Committee member Knight requested a future agenda item to address accountability and transparency for CDFA programs on percentages of administrative overhead and direct dollars going to producers.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None

D) CDFA Farms to Community Food Hubs Grant Program Update

CDFA grant administrative and outreach program specialist Christina Harrington provided an overview of the draft Request for Proposals for the CDFA Community Food Hubs grant program. Ms. Harrington provided a presentation of the proposed definitions, structure, timeline and outreach for the program, which

is open for public comment through December 6th, 2024. The presentation concluded with time for committee members to submit their public comments during the meeting or to ask clarifying questions regarding the program.

Discussion: Chair Miller noted an appreciation for usage and prioritization of “sustainable” operations but asked to clarify if producer-led operations will be prioritized or organizations serving producers will be prioritized. Ms. Harrington clarified that “producer-led food hubs” are the central focus of the grant and producers who are operating a food hub are encouraged to apply. Member Nakamura-Knight also serves on the review committee for the program and noted this was a top priority to ensure farmers were being served through this program.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None

E) Strategic Growth Council Land Equity Task Force Update

Thea Rittenhouse, Farm Equity Advisor and member of the SGC Land Equity Task Force, provided an update and summary of the most recent Land Equity Task Force meeting which was held in November. Ms. Rittenhouse discussed the different subcommittees and shared the webpage for the task force, as well as the links to the community outreach survey, which is available in Spanish, Mandarin and English.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None

(V) SSPAC Subcommittee Updates:

SSPAC Committee Member Josefina Lara Chavez provided a review of the purpose and goals of the subcommittee of the SSPAC which has been meeting regularly in 2024. Member Chavez offered an additional ten minutes for SSPAC committee members to review the draft purpose and deliverables as well as the list of emergency scenarios facing California's small-scale producers. No additions or corrections were suggested from members on the document.

Next, SSPAC subcommittee member Nakamura Knight suggested that there be a rotational involvement with this subcommittee, so that other voices can be represented in it. Member Knight supports keeping the subcommittee and also announces she will be stepping down from the subcommittee at this time.

Because there are two SSPAC committee members absent, the full committee agrees to allow the absent members an opportunity to join. Member McGrath asks for a copy

of the outline and purpose of the subcommittee for some additional time to consider joining the group.

Member Chavez outlines next steps for the subcommittee will be to finalize the document discussed today and possibly expand the subcommittee to include new members.

Public Comment:

Christopher Mouawad from UC Davis Small Farmer Water Justice Clinic submitted a public comment letter to support the inclusion of access to groundwater as a potential emergency scenario facing small-scale producers in California. Mr. Mouwad notes the complexities and challenges facing small-scale and mid-sized growers as SGMA continues to be implemented statewide. Full letter is included in public meeting materials as a component of the public record.

The presentation concluded without formal action by the Committee

(VI) TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETING DISCUSSIONS

As noted above in agenda item regarding the CDFA CUSP program, SSPAC requests discussion on CDFA and public accountability and transparency of distribution of funds, more specifically on discussion of administrative overhead and technical assistance dollars.

Request for next meeting to focus on Proposition 4 programs especially new programs serving small-scale producers and businesses.

Request for presentation and overview of services and resources offered through the UC Davis Small Farmer Water Justice Clinic.

Request for presentation and timeline for the USDA Southwest Regional Food Business Center grant program (Better Business Builder Grant program)

Request for overview or available grant programs to support long term and stable housing for farmworkers and how small-scale operations can access or refer farmworkers to housing.

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Committee.

Public Comment: None.

(VII) PUBLIC COMMENT

(VIII) CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at approximately 2:46pm