

**CALIFORNIA CITRUS PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAM
PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Hearing Minutes

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) called five hearings to receive public comment from the citrus industry and the general public on whether the California Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program (CPDPP) and the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC) should be continued. The Food and Agricultural Code, Section 5921, requires that the Department hold one or more public hearings every four years to determine whether the operation of this article should be continued. The last hearings were held in June 2013.

The Hearing information was shared on the Citrus Insider website, on the Citrus Alert e-blast newsletter and in an email to the citrus program list serve. The hearing details were as follows:

SACRAMENTO HEARING

Date: June 5, 2017
Time: 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: CDFA Auditorium
1220 N Street, Auditorium
Sacramento, California 95814

Sacramento Hearing Attendees:

Rayne Thompson

CDFA Staff:

Victoria Hornbaker Scosha Wright

TULARE HEARING

Date: June 6, 2017
Time: 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
4437 S. Laspina Street
Tulare, CA 93274

Tulare Hearing Attendees:

Jonathan Bixler	James Gorden	James McFarlane
Martin Britz	Subhas Hajari	Tracy Novak-Marin
Bruce Brown	Nick Hill	Sylvie Robbilard
Lauren Droogh	Chuck Horning	Gary Schultz
Greg Galloway	Dennis Johnston	Kevin Severns

Ventura, CA 93003

Ventura Hearing Attendees:

Bob Blakely	Bill Burke	Scosha Wright
Brian Guess	Brent Goad	Katie Nieri
Allegra Roth	Jane Waters	

CDFA Staff:

Victoria Hornbaker	Leandro Ramos	Scosha Wright
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Opening Comments

Victoria Hornbaker, Integrated Pest Control Branch Chief welcomed the attendees at each location, informed them of the purpose of the hearing and explained the comment process. The following information was presented at each hearing:

“The California Citrus Disease Prevention Program is set forth in statute in the Food and Agricultural Code, Sections 5911-5940, and was implemented in 2009 for the purpose of preventing and managing citrus diseases. The Program’s activities are funded by mandatory assessments upon all citrus producers in the State who propagate and market citrus.

The hearing comments will be considered by the Department in determining if the California Citrus Disease Prevention Program and the California Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee will be authorized to continue. If the hearing record documents that the Program is fulfilling its declared purposes, the department may authorize the Program to operate for another four years without the need for an industry referendum.

However, if the Department finds from the hearing record that a substantial question of opposition exists among affected producers regarding whether the operation of this article should be continued, the article shall be submitted for approval through the referendum process.

The call of this hearing is limited to the receipt of public comments regarding:

Whether the Program and the Committee have met their statutory requirements under the Food and Agricultural Code, Sections 5911-5940.

All comments pertinent to the call of this hearing will be received and become part of the official hearing record.”

Staff Presentation

An informational PowerPoint was presented at each of the hearings. The presentation included background information on Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and Huanglongbing (HLB) finds in California, the formation of CPDPC and the Committee's duties, which include:

- Outreach and education programs for the public on prevention of pests and diseases.
- Programs for surveying, detecting, analyzing, and treating.
- Advising the Secretary on issues pertaining to the implementation of the work plan including budgets, adoption of regulations consistent with duties of the Committee.

The presentation also included information about the CDFA urban treatments, regulatory activities, biocontrol, and a summary of future activities, such as:

- Slowing the spread of ACP in the quarantine area,
- Preventing establishment of ACP outside of the quarantine area,
- Continuing to survey for and remove HLB infected trees, and
- Maintaining vigilance for other citrus diseases.

Public Comments

Victoria notified attendees that the meeting was being recorded and that comments were limited to three minutes per speaker.

Comments were received at the public hearings and are summarized by location.

Sacramento Public Comments:

There were no public comments received.

Tulare Public Comments:

1. Justin Golding, Wonderful Citrus

Justin stated that Wonderful Citrus is supportive of the continuation of the program. The program has provided industry the ability to wage the fight against ACP and HLB. The program moves swiftly to remove HLB positive trees and has diverse functions such as outreach efforts, biocontrol releases and treatment of residential citrus is a benefit. Certain aspects should be placed on the record as being suboptimal such as day to day management operations at CDFA being directed by an industry Committee that only meets every two months; no program can be effective with this type of structure. Wonderful Citrus asks that the Secretary reconsider how the program is managed. Wonderful Citrus along with other industry leaders would be happy to provide the Secretary with recommendations on revising the management structure of the program.

2. Dennis Johnston, Chairman of the Kern County Citrus Pest Control District

Dennis stated that the Pest Control District supports the continuation of the program. Dennis stated that the Pest Control District has taken upon themselves to actively remove residential citrus trees in Kern County. This year alone the Pest Control District has supported this effort

in the amount of \$250,000. The Pest Control District focuses its efforts in areas that are infested with ACP, spending as much as \$300 per tree for removal. Dennis stated that the Pest Control District has had varying levels of success in different areas in Kern County and they would like to react to suspect or inconclusive trees however this would require a flow of information, including addresses, from CDFA to the Pest Control District in a quick manner. The Pest Control District would also like to see financial support from CDFA for the Kern County tree removal effort in the amount of \$1,000,000 dollars per year. Dennis restated that the Pest Control District needs addresses for ACP and plant sample inconclusive locations and funding from CDFA in order to be successful.

3. Kevin Severs, CPDPC Member, CCM Director, Grower and Manager of Orange Cove Sanger Citrus

Kevin stated that his comments are not being made on behalf of the CPDPC or CCM instead as a citrus grower. Kevin urges the continuance of the program with the understanding that the program is not perfect however has been successful compared to the disease progression seen in Texas and Florida. To lose the program would mean that any meaningful effort put forth thus far and the enforcement authority would be lost and USDA's involvement would be minimal if not lost. With industry involvement we can streamline the program. Furthermore, Kevin provides his commitment as a Committee member to find efficiencies and streamline the program.

4. James McFarlane, CPDPC Member and Grower

James stated the program has been a qualified success, but not perfect. Compared to Texas and Florida the program has done quite a bit of good and delayed the spread of HLB. He supports the continuation of the program

5. Jim Gorden, CRB Chairman, CPDPC Member and Tulare County Grower

He supports continuance of the program, it's not perfect, but it's the best chance growers have of preventing dispersal of the ACP for residential areas to the commercial groves.

6. Sylvie Robillard, Fresno/Madera Grower Liaison and Citrus PCA

Not a citrus grower, but she has an interest as she make her living from citrus as a PCA. There is a long history of citrus in California and in the Central Valley and everyone has a vested interest in protecting that history. She supports continuation of the citrus program. This program gives her hope, everyone is doing the best they can working long hours to slow the movement of ACP. If we hang tough we can hopefully find a solution.

7. Bruce Brown, Orange Cove/Orosi area Grower (written)

He is very much in favor of continuing the program.

San Diego Public Comments:

1. Bob Atkins, Fallbrook Citrus Grower and Statewide Grower Liaison Coordinator

Bob Atkins stated that he is a small citrus grower, growing approximately one acre of mixed citrus. He is in favor of continuing the program because it is a good example of government and industry working together to coordinate funding and areawide treatments. The grower

liaisons coordinate treatment of commercial citrus with support from CDFA on residential properties within 400 meters of commercial citrus when it is treated. Coordination is key in keeping ACP populations down and eliminating the spread of HLB. All HLB finds have been on residential properties and if there is spread to commercial groves it will most likely spread from the residential properties, so it is essential to coordinate activities to keep the vector populations down.

2. Enrico Ferro, San Diego County Grower Liaison and PCA

Enrico stated that he is a pest control advisor managing 2,000 acers of citrus. He stated how important the program is to the citrus industry and noted that that biggest reason to continue is that the program informs industry where HLB is present. He stated that with the increased detections of HLB it is imperative that industry maintains coordinated effort. Without continued coordination, he is concerned that industry is at risk and may crash quicker than Florida.

3. Travis Elder, San Diego County Grower and Nurseryman

The program is fine.

Riverside Public Comments:

There were no public comments received.

Ventura Public Comments:

1. Bob Blakely, Vice President of California Citrus Mutual (CCM)

Mr. Blakely stated that CCM is a voluntary grower association representing 75 percent of California's citrus production. The CCM board directors met and by consensus voted to support of continuation of the program. He stated that they feel that a referendum will be costly and those dollars could be better used in the control of ACP and eradication of HLB. Mr. Blakely stated that the program has been effective and is supported fully by CCM.

Letters of Support

Letters of support were received at the public hearings, via email, FAX and U.S. mail and are summarized here:

Lawrence Allen, Citrus Grower
Geary Austin, Citrus Grower
Al Bates, Citrus Grower
Cynthia Baumgartner, Citrus Grower
Ronald Beggs, Citrus Grower
David Borchard, Citrus Grower
John Borchard, Citrus Grower
Justin Brown, Citrus Grower
Teresa Buoye, Citrus Grower
Karin Callahan, Citrus Grower
Gus Carranza, Citrus Grower

Charles Matthews, Citrus Grower
Blake Mauritson, Citrus Grower
Mark McBroom, Grower & CPDPC Member
Robert McKellar, Citrus Grower
Eugene Mehlschau, Citrus Grower
Joshua Menchaca, Citrus Grower
Arlen Miller, Citrus Grower
Joel Nelsen, President and CEO of CCM
Tina Paige, Citrus Grower
Patric Patterson, Citrus Grower
Harry Peck, Citrus Grower

Chris Caviglia, Citrus Grower
Gary Caviglia, Citrus Grower
Ed Chambers, Citrus Grower
Jennifer Crawford, Citrus Grower
Nasser Dean, Citrus Grower
Walter Dreyer, Citrus Grower
Lauren Droogh, Citrus Grower
Michael Friel, Citrus Grower
John Gless, Citrus Grower & CPDPP Member
Gus Gunderson, Limoneira & CPDPC Member
Matthew Hendrick, Citrus Grower
Curt Holmes, Citrus Grower
Ross Horn, Citrus Grower
Craig Hornung, Citrus Grower

Terrance Peltzer, Citrus Grower
Martha Pilegard, Citrus Grower
Donald Reeder, Citrus Grower
David Scholle, Citrus Grower
Laurie Servin, Citrus Grower
Lynn Shafer, Citrus Grower
James Sherwood, Citrus Grower
Coburn Snyder, Citrus Grower
Rayne Thompson, Sunkist
Nancy Tomlinson, Citrus Grower
Todd Williams, Citrus Grower
Matthew Witman, Citrus Grower
Wonderful Citrus

Letters of Opposition

There were no opposing letters received.

Closing Comments and Adjournment

Victoria thanked the attendees at each location for their participation and notified them that the Department will render a decision as required by applicable statutes and regulations. Attendees were also informed that it is the Department's goal to render a decision within 30 days of the closing of the hearing record.

A final call for additional comments was made and with none Victoria, at each location, officially closed the hearings.