



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
SHIPPING POINT INSPECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SPI)  
November 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes  
Hybrid Teleconference  
2399 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95833**

**REMOTE MEMBERS**

**PRESENT**

Louis Pandol - Chair  
Patrick Smith  
Trent Voss  
Christine Ivory

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

None

**CDFA**

Sarah Cardoni  
Kristi Garcia  
Theresa Stewart  
Mitch Randhawa  
Kevin Batchelor  
Roxann Bramlage

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Raj Samran

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Kevin Batchelor.

**ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL**

Roll was called by Kristi Garcia, and a quorum was established.

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**ITEM 4: ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Garcia opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

**MOTION:** Christine Ivory nominated Louis Pandol for Chair. Patrick Smith seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions. Trent Voss was not present for this motion.

**ITEM 5: REVIEW OF MAY 22, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Pandol requested a motion to approve the May 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes as presented.

**MOTION:** Christine Ivory moved to approve the May 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes as presented. Patrick Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions. Trent Voss was not present for this motion.

## **ITEM 6: END OF YEAR RECAP**

Kevin Batchelor provided an update on the Shipping Point Inspection program's budget. In fiscal year (FY) 2023/24, services billed totaled \$24,737,918.85, with an inspection fee increase from \$46 to \$50 per hour. Revenue trends remain positive, and the program currently holds \$15,686,474.98 in reserves. For FY 2025/26, the program has requested an estimated budget authority of \$26 million via a Continuously Appropriated Proposed Spending Plan submitted to the Secretary of CDFA, to account for potential contract amendments with the Cooperative Agricultural Support Services Authority (CASS).

Batchelor discussed financial and operational considerations that could impact reserves. The Tomato Suspension Agreement (TSA), which generates \$3–\$4 million annually through inspections of tomatoes imported from Mexico, is approaching its five-year sunset review. The agreement could either remain unchanged, be eliminated, or require stricter inspections, with a final decision pending from the United States Department of Commerce. Additionally, labor and contract costs are rising at approximately eight percent annually. The program is evaluating the feasibility of hiring staff internally rather than continuing to use CASS services, estimating a 25 percent increase in costs if the transition occurs.

Regarding staffing and training, Batchelor noted the hiring of two new supervisors in October to enhance inspector training and oversight. The program is shifting toward cross-training inspectors in multiple commodities rather than specializing in a single area. Additionally, efforts are underway to establish a structured pipeline for developing future supervisors.

Batchelor also provided updates on Federal Marketing Orders and inspection fees. The Almond and Kiwi Federal Marketing Orders may be up for a vote in late 2024 or early 2025. In October 2024, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection fees increased from \$115 an hour to \$123 an hour, with the possibility of further adjustments in the future.

To improve efficiency, the program is implementing IT upgrades aimed at enhancing data collection and analytics. A key initiative involves transitioning district-level databases to a centralized system for real-time monitoring of overtime, staffing, and trends, with the goal of improving operational flexibility and decision-making.

In closing, Batchelor stated that there are no immediate concerns regarding state budget cuts, as the program's funding is sourced from industry revenue. However, revenue and costs will continue to be monitored for potential changes.

## **ITEM 7: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

The next meeting will be held in the spring. A Doodle Poll will be sent out to determine the date of the next meeting.

**ITEM 8: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m. by Chair Pandol.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Kevin Batchelor, Program Supervisor  
Inspection and Compliance Branch  
Inspection Services