

California Department of Food & Agriculture

Minutes

of the Meeting of the Pierce's Disease and Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board
and Pierce's Disease Advisory Task Force

Held on Tuesday, July 1st, 2025.

Physical Location:

Trinchero Family Estates
501 Hopkins Rd, Davis, CA 95616 and via
Web-conference and Teleconference.

PD/GWSS BOARD

Members Present: Jeff Bitter*, Rich Hammond*, John "JD" Harkey*, Randy
Heinzen, Kendall Hoxsey-Onysko*, Trey Irwin, Aaron Lange,
John McCarthy, Steve McIntyre, Dominic Rossini, Seth Schwebs*

Members Absent: Greg Coleman, Will Drayton, Jim Ledbetter, Dave Teuschler

PD ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Members Present: Chris Bowland*, Casey Creamer*, Glenn Fankhauser, Kris
Lowe*, Martin Mochizuki*, Todd Sanders*, Beth Stone-Smith*,
Judy Zaninovich*

Members Absent: Tracy Cleveland, Ha Dang

OTHER ATTENDEES

Buddhi Achhami*, Chasika Bandna, Ariana de la Torre*, Pete Downs*, Anna
Ferrera*, Leah Gayagas*, Matthew Kaiser, Giancarlo LaGiusa, Corrie Larsen, Neil
McRoberts, Michael Miiller, Warren Nichols*, Stacie Oswalt, Michelle Pham, Nicole
Shorter*, Tom Solury*, Youngsoo Son*, Stephanie Stark*, Jay Van Rein*, Zayra
Vazquez, Sean Veling, Myrna Villegas*

*Denotes attendance via web conference or teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

PD/GWSS Board Chairperson Randy Heinzen and PD Advisory Task Force
Chairperson Kristin Lowe called the joint meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Interim PDCP Statewide Coordinator Michelle Pham conducted the roll call for the
PD/GWSS Board (Board) and the PD Advisory Task Force (Task Force). Quorums
were present for both the Board and the Task Force.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Randy Heinzen welcomed everyone to meeting and stated that the referendum vote
for the continuation of the PD/GWSS Board and assessment was successfully
passed by industry members and the program will continue. Heinzen also welcomed
John McCarthy of Far Niente Wine Estates as a new Board Member from the North
Coast area. Michelle Pham of the PDCP stated that Joseph Damiano has been
temporarily reassigned to the CDFA Citrus Division and will not be in attendance for
this meeting. Kristin Lowe thanked everyone in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michelle Pham opened the meeting up to public comment. Michael Miiller of the California Association of Wine Grape Growers (CAWG) stated that the Governor's Office signed a budget and several bills that benefited the agricultural industry, and that previous language that would have frozen 8% of some industry-funded programs including the PD/GWSS program had been removed.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Michelle Pham introduced John McCarthy of Far Niente Wine Estates as a new PD/GWSS Board Member. McCarthy briefly mentioned his background in the wine industry and that he will be replacing Bill Hammond as a producer/processor representative from the North Coast.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board and Task Force meeting was set for Wednesday, November 5th, 2025, at the Trinchero Family Estates Building at UC Davis at 10:00 AM. [The meeting was subsequently rescheduled for November 19th, 2025 at the same time and place.] The following meeting would be held on Thursday, January 29th, 2026 at CDFA Headquarters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Randy Heinzen asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the joint Board and Task Force meeting held on April 16th, 2025.

- It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed by the Board to approve the minutes from the joint Board and Task Force meeting held on April 16th, 2025.

Details of Board Vote

Motion:	Trey Irwin	Second:	Steve McIntyre
In Favor:	Bitter, Hammond, Harkey, Heinzen, Hoxsey-Onysko, Irwin, McCarthy, McIntyre, Schwebs		
Against:	None		
Abstain:	None		
Absent:	Coleman, Drayton, Lange**, Ledbetter, Rossini** Teuschler		

**Not present for this action item

Kristin Lowe asked the Task Force for a motion to approve the minutes from the joint Board and Task Force meeting held on April 16th, 2025.

- It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed by the Task Force to approve the minutes from the joint Board and Task Force meeting held on April 16th, 2025.

Details of Task Force Vote

Motion: Glenn Fankhauser Second: Judy Zaninovich
In Favor: Bowland, Creamer, Fankhauser, Lowe, Mochizuki, Sanders, Stone-Smith, Zaninovich
Against: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Cleveland, Dang

REFERENDUM UPDATE

Michelle Pham provided an update regarding the recent grower referendum. This referendum on the assessment and Board was initiated on April 14th and concluded on June 12th following a 30-day extension beyond the initial deadline of May 13th. Final results were received on June 26th. The voter participation rate was 40.88%, which barely met the 40% participation requirement. The 2025 participation rate had decreased when compared to the 49% turnout in the 2020 referendum. The referendum had a 76.56% approval rate among voting producers, which was similar to the 78% rate in the 2020 referendum. The primary issue with this year's referendum was the voter participation rate, as the minimum 40% involvement rate was becoming harder to acquire. Pham thanked the industry organizations for their substantial outreach efforts, as well as CDFA Marketing Branch for conducting the referendum and answering industry question. Pham stated the program is exploring pathways to improve the process in the future. Randy Heinzen echoed Pham's thanks and reiterated the need to improve the process. Several Board members stated that they had received incorrect ballots indicating potential issues with the voter database generated from information submitted by wineries. The Board agreed it would be helpful to understand better how the voter database was created and to look for ways to improve the process. Program staff agreed to bring the board's concerns regarding the voter list to CDFA Marketing Branch.

FISCAL UPDATES

Beth Stone-Smith of the USDA provided a brief update regarding federal funding. Stone-Smith stated that no additional funding had been secured since the April 2025 meeting, and that the final allocation decisions had been made but the official notification had not yet been received. Matt Kaiser asked if the USDA was experiencing employee losses due to the recent buyout programs in the news. Stone-Smith had seen a number of employees leaving federal service, including through the Deferred Resignation Program and early retirement. This had resulted in payouts for accumulated leave and could impact program budgets.

Myna Villegas of the PDCP provided an update regarding PDCP operations funding for State Fiscal Year (FY) 23/24 and FY 24/25. Fiscal Year 23/24 actual expenditures totaled \$18.7 million with board funds at \$1.8 million and other funds at \$16.9 million. Fiscal Year 24/25 budgeted Board funds were about \$3.4 million and other funds were \$17.4 million. The budget increased by \$500,000 due to additional CDFA emergency funds (e-funds) awarded to El Dorado County, making the total budget \$20,739,516. Villegas also provided a breakdown of year-to-date expenditures for Board and other funds, as well as the remaining balance and intended uses for closing out the fiscal year. Year-to-date Board expenditures for program operations were \$2.6 million and other funds were about \$13.5 million, totaling a little over \$16 million. The remaining balance was just over \$4.6 million, which would be used for county payments and other expenses as the fiscal year closes.

Matt Kaiser of the PDCP provided an update regarding Board funds. For the FY 23/24, assessment plus interest revenue and expenditures were both approximately \$5.4 million, resulting in a balance carried over to FY24/25 of just under \$9 million. For FY 24/25, assessment revenues plus interest were just under \$4.3 million, and the projected balance at the end of the year was \$6.8 million. The Board at the previous meeting had added future obligations for research projects totaling \$2.2 million. If no additional revenue were collected and all obligations were paid down, the remaining balance would be approximately \$2.9 million. Kaiser mentioned that a USDA ARS research agreement was canceled due to administrative issues that prevented the researchers from spending the allocated funds. The funds had been disencumbered and were now being reallocated to a

new grant through UC Davis, moving some funds originally allocated for this year to next year. The Urban Rapid Response treatment costs were approximately \$1.1 million this year, with expectations of additional invoices. For FY 24/25, the Board allocated \$850,000 to prevent cuts in county workplans which was expected to be spent, and \$43,000 was expected to be used from the delimitation response contingency for Contra Costa and Sacramento Counties. So far, \$10,000 had been charged in regard to the referendum process out of \$100,000 budgeted, with the full cost for conducting the referendum expected to be determined in the coming months.

PD/GWSS BOARD BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26

Michelle Pham started by providing a summary of program operations expenses funded by the Board in FY 24/25 including the one-time allocation of \$850,000 for FY 24/25, along with ongoing efforts to reduce costs. The discussion covered the budget planning for FY 25/26, cost reduction efforts, and specific changes made to personnel, operational activities, and program structure. The program had implemented several cost reduction measures, including personnel changes, reductions in area-wide trapping, and a 3% reduction across all county agreements. PDCP had made reductions in Area-Wide Trapping by instead focusing on treatments along the grape-citrus interface, reducing the trapping season, and increasing the servicing cycle. Trapping season in non-infested counties was reduced, and counties were given additional flexibility when conducting their own trapping operations. An additional \$300,000 in funding for area-wide treatments was secured from the Consolidated Central Valley Table Grape and Pest and Disease Control District, and CDFA Emergency Funds were secured for multiple eradication projects. The program was requesting a reallocation of an additional \$250,000 to the Delimitation and Rapid Response Contingency line item for FY 25/26, increasing its total to \$350,000. Pham stated there were several reasons for needing additional contingency funding, including ongoing increases in operational costs, the risk of reductions in federal funding, and the need for flexibility in responding to emergencies and additional delimitations. Pham concluded that the program's current budget was "down to the wire" and the ability of the PDCP to absorb any unforeseen costs would be virtually non-existent.

Matt Kaiser continued the discussion by presenting the proposed Board budget for FY 25/26, going over the specific line-items. Subjects included items previously approved totaling \$2.96 million in FY 25/26 and \$708,000 in future fiscal years, as well as new items totaling \$4,193,000 in FY 25/26. The total proposed budgeted expenditures for FY 25-26 were \$7,155,752 as proposed with a projected carryover of \$6.86 million from FY 24-25. The revenue target to maintain a \$5 million carryover was \$5.3 million if all budgeted items were spent. Including a total of \$1 million in future-year obligations, the projected revenue target was \$6.3 million. Kaiser noted that not all budgeted items are completely spent each year so a lower revenue target would be reasonable.

The Board debated the necessity and usage of contingency funds and reserves for new research projects, referencing past approvals and current budget constraints. The reserve for new projects was previously set at \$500,000, then decreased to \$250,000 about two years ago, and was often not completely used or not used at all. Kristin Lowe stated that this budget line led to out-of-cycle requests, with people directly asking for money in meetings outside of the annual request for proposals and scientific review process. The Board agreed that removing out-of-cycle funding would make it easier to ensure sound scientific review and enforce budget discipline. The Board questioned the relevance of the \$5 million reserve target, referencing historical carryover, inflation, and changes in state funding. The target was set each year to cover additional obligations in the case of the assessment not being continued by growers through the referendum and the Board being dissolved. After some discussion of the assessment rate summarized below, discussion then changed to whether the Board should cut items from the budget. The Board debated whether to raise assessment fees or reduce expenses, with concerns about grower sensitivity to fee increases and the optics of raising fees after a referendum.

A general consensus of the Board was to not to increase the assessment fee for the coming year and to enact additional budget cuts instead, specifically removing the \$250,000 reserve for new projects line and removing an additional \$250,000 from the contingency for county backfill line. Randy Heinzen asked the Board for a motion to approve the FY 25/26 budget as presented, minus the above \$500,000.

- It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed by the Board to recommend a budget totaling \$6,655,752 for fiscal year 2025-26. This budget included items that were previously approved, totaling \$2,962,752 in fiscal year 2025-26, and new items that were recommended for approval at this meeting, totaling \$3,693,000 in fiscal year 2025-26. The motion included the removal from the originally proposed budget of the Reserve for New Projects at \$250,000 and reduced Contingency for County Backfill from \$1.25 million to \$900,000.

Details of Board Vote

Motion: Dominic Rossini Second: Randy Heinzen

In Favor: Bitter, Hammond, Harkey, Heinzen, Hoxsey-Onysko, Irwin, Lange, McCarthy, McIntyre, Rossini, Schwebs

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Coleman, Drayton, Ledbetter, Teuschler

ASSESSMENT RATE FOR 2025 HARVEST

Randy Heinzen opened the discussion up to everyone regarding the current assessment value and expected revenue for the next year. Heinzen noted that revenue from assessments dropped from \$5.4 million in 2023 to \$4.3 million in 2024, a 20% decrease. Research funding was down, with \$1.5 million in new funding allocated for next year and another \$700,000 for subsequent years. The board was facing a nearly 25% drop in carryover for the new fiscal year and a potential 50% reduction in research funding going forward. There was concern about the ability to maintain program goals. Several Board members stated that crop projections for the current year vary by region. Last year's crush was 2.9 million tons, and this year was expected to be similar, possibly up to 3.5 million tons if everything grown were crushed, but not all was likely to be purchased due to an ongoing inventory bubble. Some Board members believed that assessment revenue was unlikely to increase even if the crop were larger due to lower contract prices. Some members stated that the Board should not budget for increased revenue in the coming fiscal year and suggested that total crop value may fall 15% from 2024 levels. They compared expected tonnage and pricing to previous years (2023, 2024), noting significant decreases and market changes. Members noted that a significant portion of fruit was uncontracted, with the trend of one-year contracts increasing uncertainty. Further discussion included reference to a backlog for vineyard removal in Sonoma and Napa, and some growers disposing of fruit rather than selling at a loss.

After continued discussion of the budget and vote above, Heinzen asked the board for a motion regarding the 2025 assessment rate.

- It was moved, seconded, and passed by the Board to recommend the assessment rate remain at \$1.25 per \$1,000 of value in 2025.

Details of Board Vote

Motion: Trey Irwin

Second: Jeff Bitter

In Favor: Bitter, Hammond, Harkey, Hoxsey-Onysko, Irwin, Lange,
McCarthy, McIntyre, Rossini, Schwebs

Against: Heinzen

Abstain: None

Absent: Coleman, Drayton, Ledbetter, Teuschler

RESEARCH PROGRAM UPDATE

Matt Kaiser provided an update on the Board's research program. He highlighted the recent Board-sponsored session of the American Society for Enology and Viticulture (ASEV) Conference in Monterey on June 19 where Rodrigo Almeida, Luca Brillante, Yen-Wen Kuo, Summaira Riaz, and Kaiser presented. The session provided opportunities for attendees and researchers to connect and foster mutual collaboration. Monica Cooper's team was honored with the viticulture paper of the year award from ASEV for work on red blotch virus as well and was at the conference. An upcoming red blotch workshop scheduled for August 15 in Napa, organized through the UC Cooperative Extension, was also mentioned. Kaiser shared that the vine mealybug resistance screening grant was being transferred from USDA ARS to UC Davis, and thanked Summaira Riaz and Luis Diaz-Garcia for working to find a way to continue the work in the face of administrative obstacles. He noted that the scope of the grant remained unchanged. Similarly, a project funded by the PD/GWSS Board in April with Chris Wallace at ARS to work on compounds that could disrupt sharpshooter feeding would instead go to CSU Fresno with Jake Wenger, an existing collaborator on the project. Changes to the grant award were made before it was officially executed, with no changes to the budget total or scope of work. Kaiser then confirmed that all of the board's research agreements do not accept indirect costs, regardless of the recipient institution.

RESEARCH COORDINATOR AND GRAPEVINE VIRUS COMMITTEE UPDATE

Advisory Task Force Chairperson and Research Coordinator Kristin Lowe provided an update on her work and the Grapevine Virus Committee. The Grapevine Virus Committee had held two meetings thus far. A summary of the first two meetings, held on May 16th and June 25th, was presented. So far, the committee had reviewed the National Academy of Sciences Advancing Vineyard Health Report and specifically focused on the recommendations and conclusions from the report that resonated most with industry. They also identified important knowledge gaps, noting how many people mentioned each during the meetings where everyone was given the same amount of time to speak. The committee would discuss additional recommendations at its next meeting, which would then be presented to the Board at the next joint meeting. The purpose was to propose changes to the Request for Proposals and to provide more focus on the research funding process for virus issues and topics specifically resonating with the committee. Several broader structural issues were brought up by Aaron Lange, who wanted to ensure they were on future agendas for the Board. These items included a proposed Board name change, the scientific review process, and the research funding strategy. Lowe confirmed that these issues need to be addressed, and would be discussed both at the next Grapevine Virus Committee meeting and the next joint Board and Task Force meeting.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION UPDATE

Nicole Shorter of Brown-Miller Communications provided an update regarding outreach. Her discussion covered the distribution of newsletters, postcards, and e-newsletters, public outreach and engagement metrics, and the posting of information on the board's website and social media. Newsletter postcards were to be distributed to stakeholders which included articles on the referendum outcome, the current assessment rate, eradication projects, and new research starting this summer. The new postcards would be sent out in a few weeks to over 5,000 growers. Monthly e-newsletters continued to be sent to about 1,100 growers and other stakeholders, with an average open rate of about 45% and an

average click-through rate of about 3%. Information from the newsletters and e-newsletters is also posted on the Board's website and social media pages, including Facebook and LinkedIn. Media coverage reports were shared and highlighted the latest research funding, the ongoing referendum, and recent results of the referendum. Concerns were raised about a significant jump in the number of recipients in the database used for sending newsletters and postcards, which could impact printing costs and efficiency. Michelle Pham stated plans to speak with the Marketing Branch to ensure accuracy and avoid unnecessary mailings such as duplicate postcards. Updates were being made to the Board's fact sheet and timeline to reflect the assessment and the referendum outcome, as well as working with the PDCP on the annual report. Registration for fall trade shows was underway, including the Tree and Vine Expo in Turlock, and the Grape, Tree, and Nut Expo in Fresno. Updates on the program and research projects would be provided at the Crop Consultant Conference in Visalia by Matt Kaiser in September. PD Advisory Task Force Chairperson Kris Lowe would also be speaking at the Sustainable Ag Expo in November. Spotted lanternfly outreach included ongoing print and digital advertising in English and Spanish, with a print ad in American Vineyard and a web banner ad on American Vineyard's website. Meta advertising had reached over half a million people in the last 60 days, with about 652 engagements (likes, shares, comments, and website clicks).

Concern was raised about the summer newsletter draft which highlighted three new projects on spotted lanternfly and two on sharpshooters but none on viruses, despite ongoing discussions about focusing on virus issues across the state. Shorter clarified that the newsletter lists only brand-new projects, not continuing ones with the same researchers. Shorter and Lowe agreed to brainstorm and collaborate to ensure virus outreach and education is adequately represented, aiming to ensure the industry sees all of its needs represented. Discussion continued whether communications should refer to the referendum as being on the whole program or just the assessment. The industry, including Wine Institute and CAWG, referred to it as the referendum on the Pierce's Disease Control Program because the entire program is contingent on its outcome. The ballot language, however, specifically asked growers about continuing the assessment. Shorter stated that further communications will balance the ballot and Food and Agricultural Code language focused on the assessment with the broader context of it affecting the entire program.

EL DORADO COUNTY ERADICATION UPDATE

Corrie Larsen, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner for El Dorado County, provided an update regarding recent efforts to combat GWSS in their county. The eradication project was focused on a neighborhood in El Dorado Hills. The emergency project was established in October of 2024, following the detection of GWSS. Larsen stated that active eradication efforts are ongoing in El Dorado Hills, with significant progress made in survey and treatment. The project was in its first full year of monitoring with approximately 200 individual life stages of the glassy-winged sharpshooter found in El Dorado Hills. Detection efforts include checking about 65 delimitation traps weekly while conducting property-by-property visual surveys. Over 450 residential soil applications and over 100 foliar treatments had been conducted. Approximately 2,000 parasitic wasps had been released for biological control, and GWSS monitoring is expected to remain ongoing year-round. Larsen stated that the landscape contains a massive amount of host material, especially crape myrtle trees, requiring large quantities of material for effective treatment. Neighborly Pest Management, the pest control business involved in treatments, had extensive experience in Solano County and estimated the host material in El Dorado Hills was much greater than in other eradication efforts. Eradication was expected to be a multi-year process.

PDCP PROGRAM UPDATES

Stacie Oswalt of the PDCP provided an update on PDCP program operations including recent nursery statistics and activities in Solano, El Dorado, Stanislaus, and the Southern San Joaquin Valley counties. Oswalt stated that Solano County is in a critical two-year

monitoring phase to achieve eradication status as no adult GWSS had been found since July 3, 2024, although a freshly emerged egg mass was recently detected and treated. Stanislaus County is actively managing pest activity with five adult finds year-to-date, employing both soil, foliar treatments, and successfully distributing biological control wasps to El Dorado and Stanislaus counties. Suppression treatments and biological control releases were also ongoing in Fresno, Madera, and Tulare counties. Additional updates included year to date and year over year comparisons of nursery shipments, GWSS finds, and regulatory actions taken by counties.

OTHER ITEMS

A question was raised regarding the latest developments in the state's policy for employees returning to the office. Currently, CDFA employees are reporting to the office two days per week, but the situation is fluid and still evolving, with different rules for different bargaining units at the time. Ultimately, the exact policy will depend on an employee's specific classification, bargaining unit, and business need.

CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT

Board Chairperson Randy Heinzen and Task Force Chairperson Kristin Lowe adjourned the meeting at 12:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted on September 5th, 2025 by
Giancarlo LaGiusa, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Pierce's Disease Control Program
California Department of Food and Agriculture