California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
Minutes
of the Meeting/Video Conferencing
of the California Fruit Tree, Nut Tree, and Grapevine
Improvement Advisory Board (IAB)
Held on Wednesday, December 17, 2025
1220 N Street, Room 133
Sacramento, CA 95833

BOARD MEMBERS

Members Present: Cliff Beumel, Richard Bostock, Isaac Duarte, Jay Jensen, Eckhard Kaesekamp, Dan Martinez, Denise Moore, Reid Robinson

Members Absent: Jeremy Bahne, Nicholas Podsakoff

OTHER ATTENDEES*

Kristi Harrer, Brenda Lanini, Phuong Lao, Tia Russell

*As self-reported in the Zoom application

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Reid Robinson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 am and welcomed everyone. Robinson reviewed the topics of discussion and conducted roll call. A quorum was present for the Board.

BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF OFFICER

Robinson introduced that the Board needed to nominate two Stone Fruit and Nut Tree members, one Grapevine member, and one Public member. A total of seven applications were received for vacancies (attachments H01-H07), with each applicant expressing a preference for what to represent. Robinson supported nominations of both Tia Russell, because she had previously served on the Board, and Brent Burky, because he worked for the fruit and nut tree nursery, Sierra Gold. For the Grapevine member nomination, the Board agreed that the applicant Gor Gevorkyan had no relevant experience in nursery stock. Jay Jensen supported nomination of Benjamin Kaesekamp as a representative of the grapevine industry. For nomination of a Public member, Robinson acknowledged that Ted DeJong was the only applicant to express a preference for this vacancy. He asked CDFA for clarification on who can be nominated as a Public Member in general. CDFA clarified that Public Members were usually someone who can advise on research proposals and either have industry or academic experience. CDFA also stated that any applicant could be nominated as a Public Member regardless of their communicated preference. Cliff Beumel supported nomination of Sebastian Saa as a Public Member. The Board acknowledged the extensive research experience of Ted Dejong – but because the Board was not accepting many research proposals, Sebastian Saa could be better suited for exploring private funding opportunities.

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Robinson stated that the Vice Chair nominee could be a Board member entering their second term who represented Fruit and Nut Trees, because the nominated Chair already represented Grapevines. In the previous Board meeting, Jeremy Bahne was elected as Vice Chair in absentia but later declined. Beumel offered to serve as Vice Chair.

Robinson asked CDFA if motioning on Board reappointments was a new process. CDFA explained that it was not a new process for other boards, and that the Board was required to reappoint Board members after their two-year term ended.

Board Motion #1
The Board recommended the appointment of Brent Burky, Benjamin Kaesekamp, Sebastian Saa, and Tia Russell to the Fruit Tree, Nut Tree, and Grapevine Improvement Advisory Board.

Motion: Cliff Beumel
Second: Jay Jensen

In Favor: Cliff Beumel, Richard Bostock, Isaac Duarte, Jay Jensen, Eckhard Kaesekamp, Dan Martinez, Denise Moore, Reid Robinson
Against: None
Absent: Jeremy Bahne, Nicholas Podsakoff
Abstain: None

Board Motion #2
The Board elected Cliff Beumel as Vice Chair.

Motion: Reid Robinson
Second: Denise Moore

In Favor: Cliff Beumel, Richard Bostock, Isaac Duarte, Jay Jensen, Eckhard Kaesekamp, Dan Martinez, Denise Moore, Reid Robinson
Against: None
Absent: Jeremy Bahne, Nicholas Podsakoff
Abstain: None

Board Motion #3
The Board recommended the reappointment of Jeremy Bahne, Cliff Beumel, Isaac Duarte, Jay Jensen, Denise Moore, and Nicholas Podsakoff to the Fruit Tree, Nut Tree, and Grapevine Improvement Advisory Board.

Motion: Reid Robinson
Second: Jay Jensen

In Favor: Cliff Beumel, Richard Bostock, Isaac Duarte, Jay Jensen, Eckhard Kaesekamp, Dan Martinez, Denise Moore, Reid Robinson

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Against: None
Absent: Jeremy Bahne, Nicholas Podsakoff
Abstain: None

NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The Board did not propose any agenda items for the next board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:21 am.

Respectfully submitted by:
Kelley Paugh, Senior Environmental Scientist
Nursery Services Program
California Department of Food & Agriculture

ATTACHMENTS

H01_Brent Burke_Redacted ADA
H02_Cesar Mora_Redacted ADA
H03_Sebastian Saa_Redacted ADA
H04_Tia Russell_Redacted ADA
H05_Benjamin Kaesekamp_Redacted ADA
H06_Gor Gevorkyan_Redacted ADA
H07_Theodore DeJong_Redacted ADA

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