

MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
(ALL MEETINGS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC)

Location: Big Fresno Fair – Industry Commerce Building
1121 S. Chance Avenue
Fresno, CA 93702

Contact: Joshua Eddy, Executive Director
Office: (916) 654-0462

MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 5th 2015

Item
No.

(1) CALL TO ORDER

(a) The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, May 5th at approximately 10:05 a.m., President Craig McNamara presiding.

(2) ROLL CALL

Roll call taken by Joshua Eddy, Executive Director.

Present:

Bryce Lundberg
Ashley Boren
Rodney Taylor
Martha Montoya

Mike Gallo
Joy Sterling
Don Cameron
Mary Holz-Clause

Eric Holst
Craig McNamara
Ben Drake

Absent:

Miles Reiter
Helene Dillard

Donald Bransford

Nancy Casady

(3) PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD – Drought Update

The Board heard presentations from the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services and the California Department of Water Resources concerning drought actions and activities undertaken by the Administration.

Speakers included:

- Director Mark Ghilarducci, California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services
- Bill Croyle, California Department of Water Resources

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Board.

(4) DROUGHT FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Following presentations, President McNamara opened the meeting to public comments focusing on the drought.

Keith Freitas, Piedra Citrus Partners, commented on issues related to the Kings River, agricultural water sales, and drought barriers within the Delta.

Richard Molena of Visalia, commented on the need to reuse water and advance public policy associated with water reuse.

Ted Miller of Caruthers, commented on issues related to domestic wells and the impact groundwater pumping is having in the area. As a domestic well user, Mr. Miller has observed the water table dropping 10 feet within the last 15 months.

Unidentified Speaker, commented on the need to fast track desalination plants within California and questioned the panel on work that is being done to expedite this process.

Drought Forum Speakers – Continued

Stephen Young, Tree T-Pee, commented on new technology to improve water use and to address agricultural water conservation. Mr. Young advocated for the establishment of an “Innovation and Technology Fund” as part of drought assistance.

Mike Mason, Supreme Almonds, commented on agricultural water use and the advances/water stewardship undertaken by the almond industry. Mr. Mason provided statistics representing the economic impact, water use efficiency and investment in research the industry has undertaken.

Jenny Rempel, Community Water Center, commented that water is a basic human right. Ms. Rempel advocated for getting safe drinking water to communities, investing in public water systems and increasing efforts to protect water quality.

Marilyn Kinoshita, Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner, commented on the impact of the drought to Tulare County.

Janaki Jagannath, California Rural Legal Assistance, commented on the need to create drought resilient communities. Ms. Jagannath further mentioned that work that is being done in disadvantaged communities to support small farmers and rural communities during this drought period.

John Harris, Harris Farms, commented on need to get more water to farm communities. Mr. Harris mentioned that environmental restrictions are holding back the availability of water to communities that need it most.

Unidentified Speaker (Pete), commented on the fire preparedness, mitigated burning and pre-burn in relation to the current fire potential. The speaker also addressed desalination and provided perspective on how Israel is using this technology as a water source.

Florence Maly, California Department of Food and Agriculture, commented on the impact of invasive weeds on the water supply and advocated for funding to support invasive weed treatments.

Ian LeMay, California Fresh Fruit Association, expressed appreciated to the Board for having the drought conversation in Fresno. Mr. LeMay also commented that a lot of the statewide drought policy discussions focus on human health and safety as the primary goals. Mr. LeMay referenced how water availability impacts local employment and questioned when employment would be part of the human health and safety discussion.

Andy Souza, Community Food Bank, commented on the continued need of food donations within the Central Valley and on the work the food bank is doing to assist impacted communities.

Alyssa Houtby, California Citrus Mutual, commented on the impact of the drought on California’s citrus industry and how water cut-backs are impacting growers. The association is engaging with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on surface water issues and also working with the California Water Commission on Proposition 1 funding.

Alejandra Sanchez, Olam, commented on the importance of this meeting in providing context to Olam’s global customers as it relates to the drought and on the actions of state and community are taking to address it.

There were no further public comments during the Drought Forum.

(5) **CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.