



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
STANDARDIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STDZ)**

**October 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes
Hybrid Teleconference**

4437 South Laspina Street, Tulare, CA 93274

MEMBERS PRESENT

Louis Pandol
Marko Zaninovich

**REMOTE MEMBERS
PRESENT**

Garrett Patricio
Delia Cioc

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

INTERESTED PARTIES

Tesfaye Jimma – Tulare Co.
Mario Gutierrez – Kings Co.
Amanda Zito – Fresno Co.
Tyler Pereira – Tulare Co.
Chris Greer – Tulare Co.
Kim Martin – San Joaquin Co.
Nina Zlatkov – Los Angeles Co.
Cathy Roache – Alameda Co.
Rudy Valencia – Riverside Co.
Michelle Sans Soucie – Kern Co.
Tim Lewis – Monterey Co.
Yvette Pellman – Monterey Co.
Sara Sanchez Barajas – San
Bernadino Co.
Monica Winters – San Diego Co.
Melissa Cregan – Fresno Co.
Don McCoon – Alameda Co.
Christopher Aramouni – Riverside
Co.
Jeremy Wagner – San Mateo Co.
Greta Varien – Ventura Co.
Weman Reyes Gamero –
Riverside Co.
Melissa Lovett – Stanislaus Co.
Sandra Mendivil – Imperial Co.

CDFA

Marcee Yount
Kristi Garcia
Stacey Hughes
Karrie Batchelor
Anna Carrasquillo
Danny Lee

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Stacey Hughes.

ITEM 2: ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll was completed by Kristi Garcia, and a quorum was established. Introductions followed.

ITEM 3: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Hughes opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

MOTION: Garrett Patricio nominated Marko Zaninovich as Chair. Marko Zaninovich seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Hughes opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

MOTION: Marko Zaninovich nominated Garret Patricio for Vice Chair. Garret Patricio seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 5: REVIEW OF MARCH 25, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Marko Zaninovich requested a motion to approve the March 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented.

MOTION: Louis Pandol moved to approve the March 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented. Garret Patricio seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 6: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Garcia provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. Current vacancies include two Fresh Fruit positions representing oranges, one Other Fresh Fruit position representing a Fresh Fruit commodity group, four Fresh Vegetable positions representing broccoli, tomatoes or lettuce, two Other Fresh Vegetable positions representing a vegetable commodity group, and one Other Commodity position representing any commodity group subject to Standardization laws. Marko Zaninovich is currently serving his 4th term and will term out August 31, 2026.

ITEM 7: FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2018 THROUGH 2024 EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE COMPARISON

Hughes presented a graph showing expenditures and revenue from FY 2018/19 through FY 2024/25. In FY 2018/19 total expenditures equaled \$2,319,966 and total revenue equaled \$1,930,961; in FY 2019/20 total expenditures equaled \$1,793,851 and total revenue equaled \$1,646,224; in FY 2020/21 total expenditures equaled \$2,076,741 and total revenue equaled \$1,932,615; in FY 2021/22 total expenditures equaled \$2,061,538 and total revenue equaled \$2,232,860; in FY 2022/23 total expenditures equaled \$2,209,310 and total revenue equaled \$2,513,247; in FY 2023/24 total expenditures equaled \$2,148,106 and total revenue equaled \$2,238,464; and in FY 2024/25 total expenditures equaled \$2,287,816, with total revenue equaling \$2,546,144.

The review highlighted that the program operated at a deficit for several years prior to FY 2018/19, which led to cost-cutting measures and discussions about raising assessments. An assessment increase of 1 mil was approved in FY 2019/20 but delayed until 2021 due to the pandemic. This was the first increase since the program became industry-funded in 1992. The increase helped restore financial balance, though

revenue and expenses fluctuated due to factors like the pandemic and weather events, including Hurricane Hilary in 2023. In FY 2024/25, revenue rebounded, aided by \$143,000 in back assessments and efforts to bring handlers into compliance.

i. Fiscal Year 2018 through 2024 Expenditure Details

Hughes presented a graph showing expenditure details, which included total personal services, total operating expenses and equipment, and total departmental services, for FY 2018/19 through FY 2024/25. In FY 2018/19 personal services equaled \$670,699, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$1,056,442, and departmental services equaled \$550,215; in FY 2019/20 personal services equaled \$635,522, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$786,199, and departmental services equaled \$323,250; in FY 2020/21 personal services equaled \$674,467, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$985,749, and departmental services equaled \$307,924; in FY 2021/22 personal services equaled \$777,776, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$897,877, and departmental services equaled \$311,615; in FY 2022/23 personal services equaled \$748,120, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$1,001,084, and departmental services equaled \$311,785; in FY 2023/24 personal services equaled \$674,000, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$984,961, and departmental services equaled \$392,839; and in FY 2024/25 personal services equaled \$836,260, operating expenses and equipment equaled \$962,414, and departmental services equaled \$417,869.

In FY 2018/19, the program was fully staffed but began cost-cutting by redirecting staff, reducing county agreements by 10 percent, and limiting travel. Indirect costs were unusually high that year due to the program's prior association with the Produce Safety Program, which was later restructured, reducing these costs in FY 2019/20. By 2021, personnel costs dropped due to a statewide 9.25 percent pay cut, while operating expenses rose because of a one-time \$150,000 payment to Shipping Point Inspection for deferred work. In FY 2021/22, salaries were restored, county agreements increased by six percent, and annual SPI payments resumed. Personal services costs dipped slightly in FY 2022/23 due to a vacancy, while operating costs rose modestly with increased travel. In FY 2023/24, despite a three percent salary increase, personal services costs fell sharply due to two vacant positions, and counties underutilized agreements. By FY 2024/25, all positions were filled, salaries rose another three percent, and travel costs increased following state adoption of federal reimbursement rates. Lastly, Riverside County's agreement was reduced by 30 percent due to regulatory changes.

Committee members discussed optimizing county agreements to ensure funds are used effectively, considering shifting resources between counties based on enforcement needs. They acknowledged challenges posed by varying county structures and staffing models, which affect consistency in enforcement.

ITEM 8: FUND CONDITION UPDATE

Hughes provided the Fund Condition Update. FY 2024/25, the beginning fund balance was \$1,623,631. Total revenue was \$2,563,787, and available cash was \$4,187,418.

Total expenditures were \$1,890,386. There were cash adjustments of \$123,311, bringing the total ending balance to \$1,928,741.

Committee members noted that revenue trends appear stable, and excluding unforeseen events, the program should maintain a balanced budget and potentially grow its reserve. The conversation clarified that the fiscal year runs from July through June, with a 13-month accounting cycle to accommodate deferred payments and late invoices from counties.

ITEM 9: BRANCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Marcee Yount presented the Inspection & Compliance Branch organizational chart to illustrate the hierarchy and funding structure, which had been requested at the previous committee meeting. Standardization falls under the Compliance Unit, overseen by Danny Lee, whose position is funded proportionally by multiple programs: 30 percent each from the Standardization, State Organic, and Direct Marketing programs, and 10 percent from the Avocado Inspection program. Hughes manages the Standardization, Citrus, and Avocado Inspection Programs, supported by regional supervisors and staff handling assessments and enforcement. The chart also highlights other units, including the Shipping Point Inspection, Food Safety Auditing, Branch Operations, Technical Assistance Program (TAP) and the OCal Cannabis Certification Program. Committee members and program staff discussed the complexity of cost-sharing across programs and the importance of understanding this structure for advisory board members and recruitment efforts.

ITEM 10: FY 2024/25 COUNTY ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY REPORTS

Hughes presented the FY 2023/24 County Enforcement Activity Reports. A total of 18 counties participated in enforcement activities. There were 105,631 lots inspected, 11,033,643 containers inspected, and 123,483 containers were rejected. County personnel issued 611 Notices of Noncompliance and 72 Notices of Proposed Actions, with 68 Notices of Proposed Actions from Los Angeles County, two from Riverside County and two from San Diego County. There was a total of 12,358 enforcement hours worked and a total of \$813,312 invoiced for enforcement services.

Fresno County's higher labor hours were explained by its use of seasonal staff and extensive geographic coverage, while Los Angeles County's focus on wholesale inspections accounted for differences in workloads between the two counties. Committee members emphasized the value of visual aids in reports and discussed efficiency improvements and funding requests for future budgets, which must be submitted by November for consideration in March.

ITEM 11: PROGRAM UPDATES

Karrie Batchelor began by stating that the cherry industry submitted a petition to modify maturity standards, which is currently under review. The California Citrus Program added a new standard container, Number 60, for oranges and held an educational maturity field day for industry members, prior to harvest. Navel orange harvest began in October, with early rejections for color and maturity, but conditions improved after recent rains. Four experimental container permits were approved, two for grapefruit and two for oranges. Upcoming activities include port inspections for imported table grapes

from Chile and Peru, with spot inspections planned to improve efficiency. At the Otay Mesa border station, the Shipping Point Inspection handled about 25 million cartons of products with minimal rejections, and inspection volumes are expected to decline following the lifting of the Tomato Suspension Agreement.

ITEM 12: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, and will be a hybrid meeting held at the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and via Zoom.

ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m. by Chair Marko Zaninovich.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacey Hughes, Program Supervisor
Standardization Program