

Date of Hearing: June 26, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Esmeralda Soria, Chair

SB 1448 (Hurtado) – As Amended March 18, 2024

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Farm to Community Food Hub Advisory Committee: California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

SUMMARY: This bill would reorganize the Farm to Community Food Hub Advisory Committee (FCFHAC) to be comprised of seven members and would require the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to ensure geographic diversity within the advisory committee. This bill would also authorize the Strategic Growth Council to use existing or private funds to provide public members of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force a reasonable per diem allowance as well as require the Task Force report be posted on the Council's website. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Changes the makeup of the FCFHAC Committee to be comprised of 7 members and their alternates appointed by the Office of Farm to Fork:
 - a. Two members and their alternates shall be representatives of a food supply chain business, including a producer, processor, or purchaser, headquartered in California;
 - b. Two members and their alternates shall be representatives of a civil society organization, or representatives of an academic institution, including K-12 schools, with expertise in advancing food system improvements supportive of local food systems, equitable access to healthy food, labor in the food system, or climate-adaptive and climate-resilient food systems;
 - c. One member and their alternate shall be a representative of the Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education Program, housed within the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources;
 - d. One member and their alternate shall be a member of the department's BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee; and
 - e. One member and their alternate shall be a member of the department's Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee.
- 2) Extends the program from January 1, 2028 to January 1, 2030.
- 3) Requires, on or before January 1, 2026, the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force submit to the legislature and the governor as well as post on its website a report that includes a set of policy recommendations on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis.
- 4) Allows the Strategic Growth Council to provide a reasonable per diem allowance to public members of the Agricultural Land Task Force.

- 5) Requires FCFHAC member to recuse themselves from the decision making process if they have a conflict, as specified.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Office of Farm to Fork within the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) (*Food and Agricultural Code Section 49001*).
- 2) Establishes the Farmer Equity Act: Added the definition of “Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher” and “Socially Disadvantaged Group” to the Food and Agricultural Code and directed CDFA to better provide resources, outreach, technical assistance, and decision-making power to these growers (*Food and Agricultural Code Section 512*).
- 3) Establishes the Farm to Community Food Hub Program for the purpose of piloting investments in the capital aggregation and distribution infrastructure needed to increase purchasing of local, environmentally sustainable, climate-smart, and equitably produced food by schools and other institutions, build a better food system economy, support the local farming economy, accelerate climate adaptation and resilience, and employ food system workers with fair wages and working conditions (*Food and Agricultural Code Section 591*).
- 4) Establishes the Farm to Community Food Hub Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the secretary on issues related to the program.
 - a. Requires the advisory committee to be comprised of 10 members from specified regions, including 4 members who are an executive or manager of a food supply chain business headquartered in California, 4 members who are an executive or director of a civil society organization or a representative of an academic institution, and one member who is a farmer or rancher.
- 5) Establishes the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force under the Strategic Growth Council to develop recommendations on how to equitably increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional tribal and agricultural uses.
 - a. Requires the task force, on or before January 1, 2026, to submit a report to the legislature and governor that includes a set of policy recommendations on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis.

Existing federal law:

- 1) Establishes the USDA Equity Commission which recognizes the progress the Department has made in its commitment to equity since January 2021, when President Biden signed Executive Order 13985 “On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.” (*Section 1006 of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) (as amended by Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022)*).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: According to the author, the challenges facing small family farmers are overwhelming and make the simple act of growing food to feed local communities a nearly impossible task. The realities of the climate crisis, divestment in local food supply chains, and

inequalities in the greater economy disproportionately affect California’s food producers, which include the 1 in 5 California farmers who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Two of the biggest challenges small, beginning, and historically underserved farmers face are access to land and infrastructure.

Access to land is a significant hurdle as a result of inherited wealth disparity and historically unjust lending practices in large part due to discriminatory practices by the USDA. All of which have been identified in the 2020 CDFA Farmer Equity Act Report.

The sponsor states, “This bill aims to address two of the biggest challenges small, beginning, and historically underserved farmers face — access to land and market infrastructure. Access to land is a significant hurdle as a result of many barriers ranging from inherited wealth disparity to historically unjust lending practices in large part due to discriminatory practices by the USDA, all of which have been identified in the 2020 CDFA Farmer Equity Act Report. Additionally, local and regional food supply chains have been drastically underresourced, leaving small family farmers to develop new supply chains with little to no financial support to invest in the infrastructure necessary for sustainable transformation.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Community Alliance With Family Farmers (Sponsor)
Acterra: Action for A Healthy Planet
Agricola Flower & Nursery
Agricultural Institute of Marin
Agroecology Commons
Alice Waters Institute
Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement
Big Pine Paiute Tribe
California Certified Organic Farmers
California Climate & Agricultural Network (CALCAN)
California Food and Farming Network
Captain Vineyards
Carbon Cycle Institute
Center for Good Food Purchasing
Center for Land-based Learning
Centre Plate Farms
Ceres Community Project
Climate Reality Project, Los Angeles Chapter
Climate Resolve
Crop Swap LA
Environmental Working Group
Everyone's Harvest
Facts Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety
Fresh Approach
Grow Eco Farm
Growing Roots
Hen and Harvest Farm

Inland Empire Food Systems Alliance
Institute for The Studies of Societal Issues
Kitchel Family Organics
Multinational Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA)
Nco Gardens Project
Neukom Family Farms
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Old Grove Orange
Pie Ranch
Pixca LLC
Riverside Food Co-op
Roots of Change
Sierra Harvest
Slow Food Sonoma County North
Soil Born Farms
Sueño Latino of Anderson Valley
Super Duper Microgreens
Sustainable Agriculture Education
The Climate Reality Project Los Angeles Chapter
The Wilderness Society
Three Feathers Farm
Union of Concerned Scientists
Veggielution

Opposition

None on file.

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