

Date of Hearing: March 25, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Esmeralda Soria, Chair
AB 2588 (Hadwick) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

SUBJECT: District agricultural associations: board of directors: vacancies

SUMMARY: This bill would, if the Governor has not filled a vacancy on a Fair board within 90 days and the board of directors (BOD) has insufficient membership to establish a quorum, allow the BOD to temporarily appoint a director to fill the vacancy and to establish a quorum, as provided. Furthermore, this bill would authorize the Governor to appoint a different director to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term who would replace the temporary director on the board of directors, as specified.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Divides the state into agricultural districts and provides for the management of these districts by district agricultural associations. (Food and Agriculture code (FAC) 3951))
- 2) Requires the officers of the association to consist of a BOD of 9 members, establishes a 4-year term of office for the directors, and requires the directors to be appointed by the Governor, as specified. (FAC 3959-3964)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: There are 54 statutory DAAs, of which 52 are active, and 41 operate on state owned lands. They hold various activities on their sites, such as fairs, day care operations, fund raising and commercial events. DAAs in some areas provide the only event space for the local community. DAA budgets run from several hundred thousand dollars to over ten million dollars. Only a few DAAs are self-sustaining, most are not.

California's fairs operate under the guidelines of CDFA's Division of Fairs and Expositions. Collectively they host events that are attended by nearly ten million Californians and tourists annually. In addition to hosting enriching events, fairgrounds play a critical role during emergencies by serving as evacuation centers and providing housing after natural disasters.

DAA boards are responsible for overseeing fairgrounds operations, agricultural programming, financial management, and the hosting of annual fairs and community events. When vacancies occur on these boards, the positions must be filled through the gubernatorial appointment process.

In practice, vacancies may remain unfilled for extended periods. Because the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requires a majority of the board to be present to conduct official business, a board with multiple vacancies may be unable to reach the quorum necessary to act. In such circumstances, boards may be unable to approve contracts, authorize expenditures, or take other actions necessary to operate a fair. Some fair boards have operated with fewer than five members for extended periods of time. For example, the Nevada County Fair board was unable to establish a quorum for more than two years while waiting for appointments to be made.

According to the author, California's fairs are important cultural and economic institutions which support agricultural education, local businesses, and community events throughout the state. On the other hand, many fairgrounds also function as critical infrastructure during emergencies, providing staging areas for disaster response and as evacuation centers during crises, such as wildfires. Unfortunately, prolonged delays to filling vacancies on fair boards have left some boards unable to achieve the quorum required to conduct business under state law. When a board cannot meet quorum, it cannot take the actions necessary to operate a fair. This bill provides a limited and practical solution by allowing a fair board to temporarily appoint a director when a vacancy has remained unfilled for 90 days and the board cannot otherwise reach quorum. These temporary appointments must meet existing eligibility requirements and may be replaced immediately when the Governor makes an official appointment. This measure ensures that fairs can continue serving their communities while preserving the Governor's authority over permanent appointments.

Supporters state DAA directors serve four-year terms and are often small business owners, educators, farmers, ranchers, or civic leaders. They ensure the fair serves the interests of the local community and that necessary investments are made to guarantee the fairgrounds are safe gathering places for all Californians.

This bill seeks to remedy this problem by allowing a district agricultural association board to temporarily appoint a director when a vacancy remains unfilled for 90 days and the vacancy prevents the board from achieving quorum.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

California Emergency Response and Resiliency Venues and Fairgrounds (CERRVF)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
Western Fairs Association

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Victor Francovich / AGRI. / (916) 319-2084