

2016 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MISSION AND WORK PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Contra Costa County has undergone a transition from predominantly rural to become more suburban over the past 50 years. The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors created an Agricultural Core zone to preserve the best growing soils located in the Eastern portion of the County. In addition, when the voters passed transportation expenditure plans (Measure C and Measure J), they included growth limits including a requirement that 65% of the land in Contra Costa County be preserved as open space and later added an Urban Limit Line policy to further direct growth into the urban centers. Growth has effectively been limited to no more than 35% of the County.

Due to the flexibility and innovativeness of local farmers and ranchers, the Contra Costa agricultural industry continues to play an important and vital role in the local economy. The success of Contra Costa's agricultural industry requires producers to adapt to constantly changing environmental, economic, political and social conditions, creating unanticipated needs and opportunities within the agricultural community.

PURPOSE:

The Board of Supervisors, which has a long-standing commitment to supporting and promoting agriculture, seeks to assist farmers and ranchers by addressing emerging agricultural issues. For this reason, the Contra Costa County Agricultural Advisory Task Force is being reestablished to provide a forum for people and organizations that have an interest in agriculture. The mission of the Task Force is to advise and provide recommendations to the Board on matters that relate to preserving and promoting agriculture in Contra Costa County. In doing so, the Task Force will also provide a forum to support the exchange of information and ideas, advocate for projects, resolve disagreements, foster consensus and build relationships within the agricultural and ranching community.

Powers and duties

The committee shall:

1. Provide leadership and direction in formulating policies relevant to preserving and promoting agriculture, and advise the planning commission and the board of supervisors on applicable planning, zoning, and other land-use issues.
2. Make recommendations to enhance the economic viability of agriculture and to minimize undesirable environmental impacts

3. Provide active participation and leadership to develop a plan to further preserve, enhance and promote agriculture in Contra Costa County.
4. Participate periodically in the review of Contra Costa County's guidelines for the Williamson Act
5. Report to the Board of Supervisors and other bodies, as appropriate, on effects of proposed local, state and federal legislation affecting agricultural resources
6. Advise and work with city, county, district governments, special interest groups, and individuals concerning conflicts between agriculture, urban development and environmental quality
7. Advise and work with city, county, state, federal, special interest groups, individuals, and other entities and district governments concerning Agricultural preservation funding opportunities.
8. Advise County departments on the impact of programs affecting preserving and promoting agriculture in Contra Costa County.
9. Determine the committee's work schedule, procedures, budget and work products; and adopt rules for the administration of this chapter

Membership

In order to ensure that the Task Force represents each region of the County, one seat representing each of the five county districts shall be filled by a member nominated by each Supervisor. Those appointed shall be technical representatives of their profession or field, and advocates for preserving and promoting agriculture in Contra Costa County. They shall demonstrate expertise by their active involvement in agriculture, professional association and/or academic achievement. They shall be able and committed to meet regularly and should be able to communicate effectively with interested members of the public.

In addition, a seat shall be provided to a representative of the Contra Costa County Farm Bureau that is nominated by the Bureau and representatives of Harvest Time and the Cattlemen's Association that is nominated by their membership. These organizations shall submit the names of their selected representative to the Board for approval.

Although it is expected that appointments for these positions will represent the variety of agricultural interests within the County, if the need arises for additional appointments, other experts may be recommended by the Agricultural Advisory Task Force at any time to the Board of Supervisors to become seated members.

Ex officio members shall be the following persons:

1. Contra Costa County Agricultural Commissioner (or designee)

2. Contra Costa County Director of Conservation and Development (or designee)
3. A representative of the University of California Cooperative Extension nominated by the Cooperative Extension office
4. A representative of the Resource Conservation District nominated by the District

Proposed Timeline for Seating Members, Appointment Term and Terms of Regular Members

The Board of Supervisors shall appoint the regular members. The proposed timeline, which allows approximately two months to advertise the openings, accept nominations, and schedule appointments for the Board's agenda, is as follows:

- Advertise positions (TBD)
- Accept nominations (TBD)
- Board Appointments (TBD)
- First Task Force Meeting (TBD)

Appointed members of the Agricultural Task Force shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors and shall have terms of three years. No regular member shall serve more than two terms in succession. A regular member shall remain on the committee following expiration of the term being served until he or she is reappointed to a successive term or until a successor is appointed. The Board of Supervisors shall fill any vacancy on the committee, and may utilize the committee to screen the applicants' qualifications. The person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of the person he or she succeeds.

Ex officio members and the two seats nominated by industry groups will serve at will in two year terms as long as they represent the entity that selected them to serve as ex officio members of the committee and are willing and able to act as members.

Officers

The committee shall select the following officers from its membership:

1. A chairperson selected from the regular members who shall be responsible for the conduct of all meetings and the calling of special meetings, and who shall be the official representative of the committee except when a representative is otherwise designated
2. A vice-chairperson selected from the regular members who shall serve in the absence of the chairperson, and who shall succeed to the office of chairperson if that office falls vacant before the term is expired

3. A secretary selected from the ex officio members who shall be appointed by the chairperson subject to confirmation by the committee. The secretary shall maintain all records and conduct correspondence of the committee, prepare agendas and give notice of meetings and shall certify all official documents and resolutions of the committee
4. Selection of officers shall be held at the first regular scheduled meeting of the committee and annually thereafter.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the regular positions that are filled. A quorum must be present for the committee to take any action.

Meetings

Meetings of the committee shall be held as follows:

1. Regular meetings shall be held two times per year at a minimum, pursuant to a schedule of dates, times and places determined at the first meeting of the committee
2. Additional meetings may be called by the Board of Supervisors, the chairperson or by a voting quorum of members. Meetings shall only be scheduled with seventy-two (72) hours written notice of the time and place and business to be conducted
3. All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code § 54950 et seq.)
4. Subcommittees of committee members may be established as necessary by the chairperson

Staffing

The Department of Agriculture will provide primary staffing to accomplish the work of the committee as outlined in a budget approved by the Board of Supervisors. The committee may make recommendations to staff and the Board of Supervisors to hire consultants as required.

Staff Contact

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