



Lake County Board of Supervisors
255 N. Forbes Street Lakeport, CA 95453
CC: Rob Brown, Tina Scott, Bruno Sabatier, Moke Simon, EJ Crandall

April 2, 2020

Re: BOS Letter to Governor Gavin Newsom, Legislation Affecting Essential Industries

Lake County Farm Bureau is in strong support of the letter to Governor Newsom that District 5 Supervisor Rob Brown presented to the Board of Supervisors on March 31, 2020. This letter requests that Governor Newsom temporarily suspend or extend deadlines on recent key legislation that have been a burden on essential industries. Lake County Farm Bureau provided three bills that we would like Gov. Newsom to consider.

AB 5 (2019) "Independent Contractors":

AB 5 was mostly intended for California's gig economy, as one public comment in Tuesday's Board meeting noted. However, AB 5 has potential disastrous consequences for ag transportation and trucking. Most agricultural haulers are independent contractors, and while the bill is currently tied-up in the courts, the ag industry has been very concerned about its implementation in California. Specifically, in Lake County, this bill has implications for all three major crops. Winegrapes, pears and walnuts must be trucked to packing sheds, processing facilities and wineries in and out of the county.

SB 88 (2014) "Sustainable Groundwater Management Act":

SGMA was enacted to sustainably manage groundwater in nearly 150 key basins in California. Most groundwater basins are already in the process of planning, grants have been awarded, and the temporary suspension of this legislation is unlikely. However, the California ag industry has already experienced sweeping consequences, with thousands of acres of critical ag land laid fallow as a result. LCFB requests that Gov. Newsom direct the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board to extend deadlines for planning and implementation. Big Valley Groundwater Basin's management development is still in its infancy, and critical meetings with public comment cannot happen for the indefinite future. Additionally, Big Valley farmers can not afford any fees related to this program during this time of crisis.

AB 1066 (2016) "Ag Labor Overtime Bill":

This bill requires farmworkers in California to qualify for overtime pay after working 8 hours in a single day or 40 hours in a workweek. Prior to the passage of AB 1066, there was an exemption for ag employees, which allowed for agriculture's unique need during harvest-time. The bill implemented a four-year phase-in for overtime compensation for agricultural workers and three additional years for employers with 25 or fewer employees. Lake County's pear harvest has been negatively impacted by AB 1066. Bartlett pears have a 2 week window for harvest, requiring concentrated work over a short period of time. Much like SB88, the Ag Overtime Bill is one where an extension of the phase-in would be prudent.

California agriculture operates within a tightly regulated framework, making it the national leader in terms of environmental and worker protections. Consumers should feel confident that buying California Grown means participating in one of the safest and most ethically-sourced food systems in the world. However, during this global pandemic and economic crisis, the reliance on our domestic food supply should be of utmost importance. The temporary suspension or deadline extension in AB 5, SB 88 and AB 1066 will not loosen California's standards below any national regulatory average. But critical agricultural infrastructure will receive the support necessary to continue stocking our grocery shelves.

Thank you for your time, please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Brenna Sullivan
Executive Director