

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
AB 2588 (Hadwick) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

Policy Committee: Agriculture Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes the board of directors of a district agricultural association (DAA) to temporarily appoint a director to fill the vacancy and to establish a quorum, as specified, if the Governor has not filled a vacancy on the board within 90 days and the board has insufficient membership to establish a quorum.

In addition, this bill provides that:

- 1) The term of office for a director temporarily appointed pursuant to this bill shall be consistent with Section 3960 of the Food and Agriculture Code (that is, four years from the beginning of the term), except that the Governor may appoint a different director to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term upon which the temporary director shall no longer be on the board of directors.
- 2) Any eligibility requirements imposed pursuant to Chapter 3 of the Food and Agriculture Code shall apply to a temporary director appointed pursuant to this bill.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Minor and absorbable state costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

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.

Assembly Bill 2588 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.

- 2) **Background.** According to a 2023 report by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), California has one of the nation’s largest fair networks. The network consists of 79 fairs that operate under a variety of governance structures, such as state institutions (DAAs), counties, and non-profits – collectively known as “state-designated fairs.” CDFA provides fiscal and policy oversight for the network. Fairs are most known for their annual fairs but they also operate year-round, offering agricultural education and environmental leadership and hosting smaller events like trade shows, concerts, and private events that generate millions of dollars in state and local revenues to cover the fairs’ operational needs. Many fairs are also part of the state’s emergency response network.

This bill is supported by the Western Fairs Association (WFA), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the California Emergency Response Resiliency Venues and Fairgrounds Association. According to RCRC, county fair facilities and the DAAs serve critical functions across California, yet funding has dropped dramatically for these sites with the loss of horse racing license fees in 2009, and the elimination of a continuous appropriation from the state at the end of 2011. Additionally, RCRC writes, these boards operate under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and require gubernatorial appointments, “which means that quorums may not occur for months or years at a time. This can stall maintenance and operations, capital projects, and funding requests that are subject to board approval.” WFA writes that 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.”

Supporters contend this bill ensures fairs have the necessary quorums to conduct business and serve their local communities.

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