

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 52 (Aguiar-Curry)
As Amended January 8, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill would authorize the Secretary of Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to establish 2 advisory committees, known as the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee and the Small-Scale Producer (SSP) Advisory Committee, for the purpose of advising the secretary and CDFA with respect to their responsibilities under the Farmer Equity Act of 2017.

Major Provisions

- 1) Would authorize the Secretary of CDFA to establish 2 advisory committees, known as the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee and the Small-Scale Producer (SSP) Advisory Committee, for the purpose of advising the secretary and CDFA with respect to their responsibilities under the Farmer Equity Act of 2017.
- 2) Would authorize the advisory committees to advise the secretary on programs, policies, education, outreach, technical assistance, and general needs for small-scale producers, medium-scale producers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFRs) in California.
- 3) Would require the members of the advisory committees to be small-scale or medium-scale SDFR, as provided.

COMMENTS

Within CDFA, there is a BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee and a SSP Advisory. The California BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee's purpose is to advise the Secretary on matters pertaining to the implementation of the Farmer Equity Act, and recommendations contained within the Farmer Equity Report, including all efforts to ensure socially disadvantaged producers and ranchers are better served through CDFA's programs, policies, and communications.

The California SSP Advisory Committee advises the Secretary and State Board on matters pertaining to small-scale and medium scale producers in California and programs, research, technology, workforce development practices and equity issues that will ensure a platform for small-scale producers to advise on CDFA programs, resources, technical assistance, and communication.

According to the Author

The author states the Farmer Equity Act of 2017 requires CDFA to consult with these committees and they have become an important part of implementing the Farmer Equity Act, but are not established in statute, meaning they could be dissolved if there were any changes in administration. AB 52 seeks to establish these committees in statute so that they can continue to advise CDFA based on their needs and lived experiences.

Arguments in Support

Supporters state AB 52 is critical to ensure equitable inclusion of diverse farmers as it puts these two committees in statute, confirming their importance and making them less susceptible to removal. Inclusive and representative policy processes lead to stronger and more effective programs. Ensuring that farmers from a range of backgrounds and operation sizes have access to the shaping of priorities creates more equitable and transparent governance.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

- 1) CDFA estimates its annual cost to reimburse advisory committee members for travel expenses to be approximately \$10,000 (General Fund). CDFA notes that advisory committee members were historically reimbursed for their travel expenses. However, due to recent budget cuts, the department eliminated most of its travel funds available for committee expenses – and both committees have been meeting primarily virtually as a result.
- 2) Ongoing cost pressure, in the tens of thousands of dollars but potentially in excess of \$150,000 annually (General Fund), in staffing costs to facilitate the work of the advisory committees. To date, CDFA's Farm Equity Advisor (see background for more information) and one analyst dedicate a portion of their time to support both committees.

As part of the Governor's proposed budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, CDFA is requesting approximately \$25 million ongoing (General Fund) for 10 permanent positions for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. One of these positions is a small farm business and regulatory liaison, who, among other responsibilities, will co-facilitate the small-scale producer advisory committee, as well as be the point of contact for issues pertaining to small-scale farming and ranching operations in the state.

Regardless, because the primary purpose of the bill is to establish an advisory committee, the bill is a candidate for the committee's suspense file, consistent with the committee's rules.

VOTES

ASM AGRICULTURE: 7-0-1

YES: Soria, Alanis, Aguiar-Curry, Connolly, Jeff Gonzalez, Irwin, Ransom

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hadwick

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Stefani, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Bauer-Kahan, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

VERSION: January 8, 2026

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FN: 0002220