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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**  
**Senator Anna Caballero, Chair**  
**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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**Bill No:** AB 52 **Hearing Date:** 6/16/26  
**Author:** Aguiar-Curry  
**Version:** 1/8/26  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Reichel Everhart

**Subject:** Farmer equity: advisory committees

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes the secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to establish the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee and the Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the secretary and the department on the responsibilities of the secretary and the department under the Farmer Equity Act of 2017.

**BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW:**

Existing federal law:

- 1) States the Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out an outreach and technical assistance program to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in owning and operating farms and ranches and in participating equitably in the full range of agricultural programs offered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- 2) States the outreach and technical assistance program under paragraph (1) shall:
  - a. Enhance coordination of the outreach, technical assistance, and education efforts authorized under various agriculture programs; and
  - b. Include information on, and assistance with:
    - i. Commodity, conservation, credit, rural, and business development programs;
    - ii. Application and bidding procedures;
    - iii. Farm and risk management;
    - iv. Marketing; and

- v. Other activities essential to participation in agricultural and other programs of the Department<sup>1</sup>
- 3) Defines “socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher” as:
    - a. Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Socially disadvantaged groups include the following:
      - i. American Indians or Alaskan Natives
      - ii. Asians or Asian-Americans
      - iii. Blacks or African Americans
      - iv. Native Hawaiians or other Pacific islanders
      - v. Hispanics
  - 4) Defines a “limited resource farmer or rancher” as a producer who is both:
    - a. A producer whose direct or indirect gross farm sales do not exceed \$100,000 in both of the two calendar years that precede the calendar year that corresponds to the relevant program year, adjusted upwards for any general inflation since fiscal year 2004., inflation as measured using the Priced Paid by Farmer Index, compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and
    - b. A producer whose total household income is at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of the county median household income for the same two calendar years referenced in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, as determined annually using Commerce Department data.
  - 5) Defines “beginning farmer or rancher” to mean a person that:
    - a. Has not operated a farm or ranch
    - b. Has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years
    - c. Meets other criteria established by the Secretary<sup>2</sup>.

Existing state law:

- 1) Establishes the Farmer Equity Act of 2017 which requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to support socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and include this support in the department’s vision and its relevant policies<sup>3</sup>.
- 2) Defines “socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher” to mean a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

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<sup>1</sup> [7 USC 2279](#): Outreach and assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers

<sup>2</sup> 7 CFR Section 760.107

<sup>3</sup> FAC Section 511

- 3) Defines “socially disadvantaged group” to mean a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following:
  - a. African Americans
  - b. Native Indians
  - c. Alaskan Natives
  - d. Hispanics
  - e. Asian Americans
  - f. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders<sup>4</sup>

### **PROPOSED LAW:**

This bill:

- 1) Adds Section 513.5 of the Food and Agricultural Code to allow the secretary of CDFA to establish two advisory committees, which shall be known as the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee and the Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the secretary and the department on programs, policies, education, outreach, technical assistance, and general needs for small-scale producers, medium-scale producers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in California.
- 2) States the members of the advisory committees shall be small-scale or medium-scale socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.
- 3) States all members of the advisory committees, while on official business, shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

### **ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author:

“In 2017, I authored the Farmer Equity Act, which defined “socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers,” and required that CDFA include them in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of its programs and policies. Since its implementation, the CA Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committees have been essential to fulfilling the intent of the Farmer Equity Act, but they were created administratively and are not established in statute. Without a clear authority, these committees are vulnerable to shifting priorities or administrative changes, putting the

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<sup>4</sup> FAC 512

continued inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in CDFA decision-making at risk. This bill will codify these advisory committees, ensuring that the voices of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers continue to be heard in the development and implementation of the department’s policies and programs.”

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:**

None received.

**COMMENTS:**

The Farmer Equity Act of 2017 was signed into law to ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, including socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in urbanized areas, in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, regulations, policies, and programs. Among other things, the Act provides a definition of a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, which mirrors what is in the United States Code.

By relying on definitions like “socially disadvantaged farmer,” "beginning farmer," or "limited resource farmer" as is set by federal regulations, the state can provide information and aid to underserved groups without creating a state-sanctioned preference-based on race or gender.

**RELATED LEGISLATION:**

AB 1348 (Chapter 620, Statutes of 2017): Established the Farmer Equity Act of 2017 which requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDF) in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, regulations, and policies and programs.

**PRIOR ACTIONS:**

Assembly Floor:	63 - 7
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	11 - 0
Assembly Agriculture Committee:	7 - 0

**SUPPORT:**

Breast Cancer Prevention Partners  
California Farmer Justice Collaborative  
California Food and Farming Network  
Californians for Pesticide Reform  
Carbon Cycle Institute  
Center for Environmental Health  
Ceres Community Project  
Community Alliance With Family Farmers (1146217)  
Crop Swap LA  
Cultural Roots Nursery  
Educate to Invigorate  
Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety  
Farm2people  
Fresh Approach  
Los Angeles Food Policy Council  
Organización En California De Líderes Campesinas, INC.  
Pesticide Action and Agroecology Network  
Resource Renewal Institute  
Roots of Change  
San Diego Food System Alliance  
Sierra Harvest

**OPPOSITION:**

None received

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