



PRESS RELEASE -For Immediate Release: May 14, 2021
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Governor's Budget Release - Funding Needed for Ending Agricultural Burning in the San Joaquin Valley and Increases in the FARMER Program

SACRAMENTO, Calif. May 14, 2021 – The Almond Alliance of California (AAC) has been tirelessly advocating for funding alternatives to agriculture open burn prior to and after the California Air Resources Board recently banned the practice. In partnership with a coalition of agriculture entities, the Almond Alliance advocated for short-term and long-term funding to support alternatives to burning to address existing and the quickly growing number of piles of removed trees and vines as a result of the industry's inability to open burn.

Today, Governor Newsom announced his May Revise Budget Proposal that includes \$150 million towards the Alternatives to Agricultural Burning Incentive Program. This program is critical for providing financial incentives to almond growers for chipping orchard removals and then on-field reuse through soil incorporation, land application, or other approved on-field practices. The program is also important to incentivize removal of fruit and nut orchards and vineyards. This funding is an important step to sustain and expand the alternative to burning program which is administered by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "We communicated the challenges faced by smaller almond growers with chipping, shredding, and incorporation of orchard removals and prunings, the need to expand the existing alternative program to address grower demand along with ways to facilitate expansion of the fleet of orchard removal and soil incorporation equipment needed to provide the service," said Elaine Trevino, President of the Almond Alliance.

In addition to funding the alternative to open agriculture burning program, the Governor proposed \$213 million in funding for the FARMER Program, which is the agriculture equipment incentive program, to help fund purchases of cleaner agriculture-related equipment like harvesting equipment, heavy-duty trucks, agricultural pump engines, tractors, and other equipment used in agricultural operations. These funds provide emission reductions by upgrading old equipment with new equipment.

Utilizing FARMER funding, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has been able to incentivize the purchase of thousands of pieces of new equipment including electric utility vehicles, tractor replacements, and the electrification of agricultural irrigation pumps. This public investment is matched with private money



and has resulted in the reduction of harmful air pollutants in the Central Valley, as well as significant reductions in fuel combustion and greenhouse gas emissions.

We appreciate that Governor Newsom included these important programs in his May Revise Budget Proposal and will continue to work with the Legislature to ensure that they remain in the final budget.

About the Almond Alliance

The Almond Alliance of California (AAC) is a trusted non-profit organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of the California almond community. California almonds generate more than \$21 billion in economic revenue and directly contribute more than \$11 billion to the state's total economy. California's top agricultural export, almonds create approximately 104,000 jobs statewide, over 97,000 in the Central Valley, which suffers from chronic unemployment. The AAC is dedicated to educating state legislators, policy makers and regulatory officials about the California almond community. As a membership-based organization, our members include almond processors, hullers/shellers, growers and allied businesses. Through workshops, newsletters, conferences, social media and personal meetings, AAC works to raise awareness, knowledge and provide a better understanding about the scope, size, value and sustainability of the California almond community.

For more information on the Almond Alliance, visit <https://almondalliance.org/> or check out the Almond Alliance on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.