

Almond

ADVANTAGE

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Almond Alliance Leads Efforts for Agricultural Disaster Relief

In recent years, California's almond growers have faced severe natural disasters, from devastating freezes to record-breaking floods. These events have significantly impacted the industry, requiring swift action at both state and federal levels. The Almond Alliance has led efforts to secure disaster relief, ensuring that growers receive the critical support needed to recover and continue contributing to California's agricultural economy.. Pg. 4

New Employment Laws for 2025

Every year, California employers are faced with new laws and cases that impact the day-to-day operation of their business. The following is a very brief summary of 5 noteworthy new California laws enacted in 2024, which go into effect on January 1, 2025. Pg. 26

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This program is funded by a two million dollar grant awarded to the Almond Alliance by California Department of Food and Agriculture.



ALMOND ALLIANCE LEADS EFFORTS FOR AGRICULTURAL DISASTER RELIEF

By: Blake Vann, Almond Alliance Chair

In recent years, California's almond growers have faced severe natural disasters, from devastating freezes to record-breaking floods. These events have significantly impacted the industry, requiring swift action at both state and federal levels. The Almond Alliance has led efforts to secure disaster relief, ensuring that growers receive the critical support needed to recover and continue contributing to California's agricultural economy.

Following the 2022 disasters, the Almond Alliance successfully advocated for over \$3 billion in federal assistance for commodity and specialty crop producers, including almond growers, through the Emergency Relief Program. This funding provided vital relief to farmers devastated by floods, frosts, and droughts.

Over the years, we continued to work on supporting our growers affected by recurring natural disasters.

A major success this year was the introduction of the *Agriculture Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*, which was introduced by Congressmen David G. Valadao (R-CA) and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA). The Almond Alliance collaborated with a coalition of agricultural groups across California to ensure the bill addresses the specific needs of the almond industry.

The bill proposes \$14 billion in disaster relief funding to the Office of the Secretary for Agriculture for 2023 disaster expenses, aimed at helping farmers recover from crop and livestock losses. It incorporates provisions from past relief programs, including drought definitions and direct payments, and ensures simultaneous payment administration for all producers. With California's almond industry severely affected by ongoing drought and flooding, the Almond Alliance sees this relief package as vital to ensuring both the immediate recovery and long-term sustainability of the nation's farming communities.

In order to ensure that farms and rural communities have the resources they need to recover and continue feeding our markets, we urge Congress to act quickly to pass this legislation. This bill will ensure they have the resources they need to recover and continue feeding our markets.

The Almond Alliance remains committed to advocating for policies that protect growers from the growing frequency of natural disasters. We are proud of the progress made so far and will continue to lead efforts for disaster relief, ensuring California's almond industry stays strong for generations to come.



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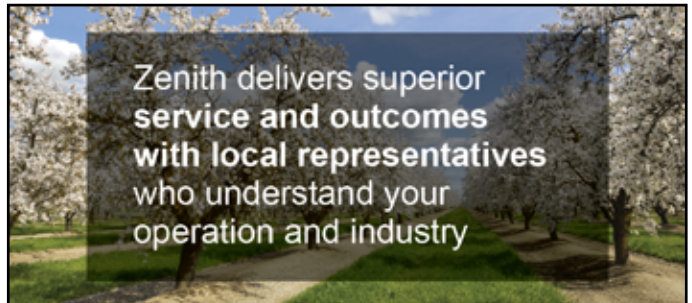
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2024 LEGISLATIVE RECAP

By: Dick Cunningham, Almond PAC Chair

In 2024, the Almond Alliance remained focused on advancing the industry's priorities at the state and federal levels, navigating complex issues such as California's budget deficit and a competitive federal election cycle. While the landscape was not without its difficulties, our advocacy efforts addressed some of the most pressing concerns.

A Year of Advocacy at the State Level

California's legislative landscape presented significant hurdles this year, with over 4,800 bills introduced and a \$68 billion budget deficit looming. Despite these challenges, the Almond Alliance secured several victories that will have lasting impacts on the almond industry.

One major achievement was the passage of AB 1581 (Kalra), which allows almond growers to participate in Conservation Benefit Agreements (CBAs) without fear of regulatory repercussions. This legislation, achieved in partnership with the Wine Institute, ensures that landowners who implement conservation measures are protected, advancing both environmental sustainability and operational flexibility.

There was some positive movement on broader regulatory improvements with the passage of AB 2113 (Garcia). While this measure includes an increase in the "mill tax," the agricultural industry succeeded in securing additional oversight and transparency provisions for DPR. With AB 2113, DPR must now monitor and report on various regulatory and operational metrics, including annual disclosures on processing times for reviewing and approving new pesticide registrations and amendments. This added accountability aims to enhance DPR's transparency and efficiency in its regulatory responsibilities.

Federal Advocacy: Critical Election Year

On the federal front, the 2024 elections will have far-reaching implications for agriculture and the almond industry. The Almond Alliance's advocacy efforts at the national level have focused on protecting trade agreements, securing labor access, and influencing environmental regulations that directly impact almond growers.

Control of the House of Representatives is at stake, with key races in agriculture-heavy districts like CA-22 and CA-13, where incumbents with agricultural ties are battling to maintain their seats. These races will play a crucial role in shaping the policies that impact our industry.

Meanwhile, the Senate races are just as competitive, with both parties vying for control in states like Arizona, Montana, and Ohio. The outcomes will influence everything from trade to agricultural labor policy. Almond growers are particularly attuned to how the next administration will address these issues.

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, the Almond Alliance will continue to provide updates and insights on the legislative landscape. Our efforts at both the state and federal levels have ensured that the almond industry remains competitive, sustainable, and resilient in the face of evolving challenges. A more detailed recap of our 2024 advocacy work will be available in the upcoming Advocacy Report, so stay tuned for a comprehensive analysis.

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FARM BILL ADVOCACY AND INDUSTRY PROTECTION: THE ALMOND ALLIANCE IN ACTION

By: Cole Rojewski, RBW Group

As the Farm Bill discussions gain momentum during the lame-duck session, the Almond Alliance remains actively engaged in advocating for critical provisions. With bipartisan efforts led by key figures like House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA) and Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA), optimism is growing that a comprehensive five-year farm bill may be finalized before Congress adjourns. There is hope that this bipartisan bill will be attached to essential legislation, such as the National Defense Authorization Act.

The Almond Alliance continues to push for key provisions that will benefit its members, including increased funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program, enhancements to the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), the establishment of a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee, and the inclusion of almonds in commodity marketing orders. These initiatives will strengthen the almond sector's resilience and ability to compete in the global market.

Trade Initiatives: Strengthening Global Competitiveness

International trade remains a critical area for the Almond Alliance, which has been actively engaged in addressing challenges that affect the almond industry. The Alliance has been advocating for Congressional action on China's Decree 248, which has complicated almond exports. Additionally, they are working to transfer the CIFER portal to the AMS to ease application bottlenecks. The Almond Alliance is closely monitoring trade disputes, especially concerns about proposed tariff strategies that could lead to retaliatory actions from China and other partners. By participating in the Congressional Ag Trade Caucus and advocating for solutions to export barriers, the Almond Alliance is working to ensure a favorable trading environment for almond growers.

Disaster Relief: Supporting Growers Impacted by Natural Disasters

Natural disasters in 2023 took a heavy toll on almond growers, and the Almond Alliance has been at the forefront of efforts to secure disaster relief funding. Through collaboration with legislators such as Congressmen David Valadao and Jimmy Panetta, the Alliance has supported the bipartisan Agriculture Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, which proposes \$14 billion in relief funding for farmers impacted by 2023's extreme weather events. This bill is a critical lifeline for the almond industry as it navigates recovery.

Invasive Pest Control and Regulatory Engagement

Invasive pests continue to pose a threat to almond crops, and the Almond Alliance has been actively advocating for funding to combat these pests. Positive outcomes from the FY25 appropriations process include \$1 million for research on the *Carpophilus truncatus* beetle and \$9.34 million allocated for Navel Orangeworm research. The Alliance remains committed to collaborating with state agricultural universities, industry stakeholders, and federal agencies to mitigate pest threats.

EPA Engagement: Safeguarding Industry Interests

The Almond Alliance plays a crucial role in regulatory advocacy, particularly in its engagement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2024, the Alliance worked diligently to represent the almond industry in several key areas, including the EPA's new Vulnerable Species Action Plan, which impacts pesticide use near endangered species habitats. The Alliance also provided input on updated worker protection standards for pesticide applications. It contributed to discussions on the EPA's strategies for managing herbicides and insecticides under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These regulatory actions have significant implications for almond growers, and the Almond Alliance's involvement ensures that industry perspectives are heard and respected in final decisions.

By focusing on these critical areas, the Almond Alliance continues to protect and advocate for the long-term sustainability of the almond industry.



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2024 LEGISLATIVE YEAR IN REVIEW: ALMOND INDUSTRY FOCUS

By: Erin Norwood, Norwood Associates, LLC

The Almond Alliance is pleased to share an overview of the legislative landscape in 2024, a year marked by significant fiscal challenges and policy changes that directly impacted the agricultural community. As the California Legislature navigated a substantial budget deficit, the almond industry faced new and ongoing challenges, with critical legislative developments across sectors that shape the future of farming.

A Wake-Up Call for Fiscal Reality

After years of budget surpluses, 2024 signaled a stark fiscal wake-up call for the California Legislature. The projected \$100 billion surplus from previous years shrank to approximately \$60 billion, and the state faced a \$68 billion budget deficit entering the legislative session. As lawmakers grappled with the deficit, over 4,800 bills were introduced, of which nearly 4,000 had fiscal implications. This fiscal reality put pressure on legislators to prioritize spending and focus on balancing the budget, which in some cases worked to the advantage of the business and agricultural sectors, as expensive or burdensome bills were halted.

Despite the deficit, Governor Gavin Newsom signed over 1,000 bills into law, addressing a wide array of issues, including labor law reforms, environmental regulations, and public health policies. The Almond Alliance remained vigilant in monitoring these developments and advocating for the industry's needs.

Key Agricultural Legislation

In 2024, the California Legislature passed several bills that directly affect almond growers and the broader agricultural community. One major victory was **AB 1581 (Kalra)**, which allows almond growers to engage in Conservation Benefit Agreements (CBAs) under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service without fear of regulatory backlash. This legislation provides critical protections for private landowners implementing conservation measures, streamlining processes for almond producers who prioritize environmental stewardship.

Another important bill, **SB 1117 (Laird)**, was signed into law, authorizing unannounced spot inspections of organic products to ensure compliance with stringent standards. This measure increases accountability and transparency in California's robust organic industry, benefitting almond producers who are organic-certified or looking to enhance their sustainable practices.

Pesticide Legislation

Pesticide regulation continued to be a critical topic for almond growers in 2024. **AB 2113 (Garcia)** introduced timelines for the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to process pesticide registration applications and implement mitigation measures for pesticides with potential adverse effects. This bill ensures that growers have clear expectations for regulatory timelines, helping to avoid costly delays in the use of necessary crop protection tools.

(con't pg 12)

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2024 LEGISLATIVE YEAR IN REVIEW: ALMOND INDUSTRY FOCUS (Con't)

By: Erin Norwood, Norwood Associates, LLC

Additionally, **AB 1963 (Friedman)** mandates that DPR reevaluate paraquat dichloride by 2029, a move that could impact its future use. The Almond Alliance opposed this measure due to concerns about reduced access to essential pesticides, but remains engaged in ensuring the reevaluation process is fair and grounded in sound science.

Labor and Employment Reforms

Labor reforms also shaped the 2024 legislative session, with the passage of **AB 2288 (Kalra)**, which introduced changes to the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA). This bill tightened standing requirements for claims and provided employers with an opportunity to cure violations before facing lawsuits. These reforms aim to reduce frivolous lawsuits that have historically burdened agricultural employers, providing some relief to the almond industry, which employs thousands of workers across the state.

Environmental and Water Policy

Water policy remained a hot-button issue in 2024, with **AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan)** increasing penalties for water rights violations. This bill

reflects California's growing focus on sustainable water management, a vital issue for almond growers who rely on access to water resources for irrigation. Additionally, the **Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024** was placed on the November ballot, promising \$10 billion in bonds to address water, wildfire, and drought resilience, which could provide future funding for water infrastructure benefiting agriculture.

Looking Ahead

The Almond Alliance remains committed to advocating for the industry as California continues to navigate its complex fiscal and environmental challenges. By staying engaged in the legislative process and fostering collaboration with policymakers, the Almond Alliance ensures that the voice of the almond industry is heard and that the needs of growers, processors, and marketers are met.

As we move into 2025, the Almond Alliance will continue its work on behalf of its members, promoting sustainability, economic resilience, and a thriving almond industry in California.



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ALMOND ALLIANCE HIGHLIGHTS: MUST-ATTEND EVENTS AT THE ALMOND CONFERENCE

By Annie Romero, Director of Membership and Events

The Almond Conference is right around the corner, and the Almond Alliance has an incredible lineup of events and activities you won't want to miss. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for opportunities to network, learn, and engage with leaders in the almond industry. We can't wait to see you at The Almond Conference!

Tuesday, December 10th: The Annual Almond Alliance Holiday Soiree: Movers & Shakers

Start your Almond Conference experience with the Almond Alliance's Holiday Soiree: Movers & Shakers. This festive event gathers industry stakeholders, agency partners, legislators, and key almond industry players for an unforgettable evening. Sip on signature almond-themed cocktails, connect with peers, and toast to the season as we celebrate the community that drives our industry forward.

Time: 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: The Citizen Hotel, 926 J St, Sacramento, CA 95814

December 10th - 12th

Almond Alliance Booth #1333

Stop by Booth #1333 for networking, meet & greets, and insights into the Almond Alliance's advocacy efforts. This year, we're hosting **Office Hours** with our Board, Committee members, staff, and partners to answer your questions and connect you with key resources.

Office Hours:

- Tuesday, December 10th: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday, December 11th: 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Don't miss this chance to engage with the Alliance team and discover how we're working on the front lines for the almond industry.

Wednesday, December 11th

Almond Alliance Session: Navigating the Political Landscape: Advocating for the Future of American Almonds

Join the Almond Alliance for a deep dive into the legislative and political landscape impacting the almond industry. Gain valuable insights into key policies and upcoming changes and learn how the industry and its advocates are preparing to navigate the current challenges and evolving dynamics within the almond community.

Time: 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Location: Ballroom B-1

Moderator:

- Blake Vann, Vann Family Orchards and Almond Alliance Chair

Panelists:

- Senator Anna Caballero
 - Assemblymember Juan Alanis
 - Assemblymember Heath Flora
 - Assemblymember Jasmeet Kaur Bains, M.D.
-



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ASSEMBLYMEMBER JUAN ALANIS AWARDED ALMOND CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

The Almond Alliance is proud to honor Assemblymember Juan Alanis as the recipient of the 2024 Almond Champion of the Year Award. Assemblymember Alanis is recognized for his exceptional leadership and advocacy for California’s almond industry. As the Vice Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, he has been a strong voice for the Almond Alliance, consistently demonstrating his dedication to the industry’s growth and sustainability.

“The Almond Alliance is honored to recognize Assemblymember Juan Alanis for his unwavering support and leadership in advancing the almond industry,” said Alicia Rockwell, chair of the Almond Alliance government relations committee. “We appreciate his commitment to a hands-on approach in advocating for agriculture, and the almond industry. His efforts have given California almond farm families a fighting chance.”

The Almond Champion of the Year Award is presented annually to individuals who demonstrate extraordinary leadership in education, coalition-building, partnerships, and promoting legislation and policies that encourage the advancement and protection of California agriculture, particularly the almond industry. The award recipient is selected by the Almond Alliance’s Government Relations committee, which includes the following esteemed members:



(con’t pg 18)



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ASSEMBLYMEMBER JUAN ALANIS AWARDED ALMOND CHAMPION OF THE YEAR (Con't)

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- Blake Vann, Vann Brothers
- Jeannine Grech, Campos Brothers Farms
- Alicia Rockwell, Blue Diamond Growers
- Dave Phippen, Travaille & Phippen
- Melissa Frank, The Wonderful Company
- Steve Van Duyn, Van Duyn Family Farms
- Todd Meyer, Bear Republic Nut
- Bill Lyons, Mapes Ranch
- Sebastian Silvera, Gladstone Farms
- Taj Samran, Hilltop Ranch

Past recipients of this prestigious award include the Department of Water Resources, Assemblymember Adam Gray, Assemblymember Heath Flora, former USDA State Executive Director of Farm Service Agency Connie Conway, Assemblymember Carlos Villapudua, and CDFA Undersecretary Christie Birdsong.

The award was presented to Assemblymember Alanis at the California Almond Political Action Committee's Annual Modesto Fundraiser, at Del Rio Country Club on November 6, 2024. Thank you for all that join us to celebrate.





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The Report

Winton-Ireland, Strom & Green Insurance Agency

Almond Alliance Edition

The Value of Cyber Liability Insurance

As cyberattacks become more frequent and costly, it's crucial for organizations to maximize their financial protection against related losses by purchasing sufficient insurance. Cyber coverage, also known as cyber liability insurance, can help organizations pay for a range of expenses that may result from cyber incidents—including (but not limited to) data breaches, ransomware attacks, and phishing scams.

Specific cyber insurance offerings differ between carriers. Furthermore, organizations' coverage needs may vary based on their exposures. In any case, cyber insurance agreements typically fall into two categories: first-party coverage and third-party coverage. It's best for policyholders to have a clear understanding of both categories of coverage in order to comprehend the key protections offered by their cyber insurance. This article highlights the value of cyber insurance by outlining common first and third-party coverage offerings.

First-Party Coverage

First-party cyber insurance can offer financial protection for losses that an organization directly sustains from a cyber incident. Covered losses generally include the following:

Incident response costs -This coverage can help pay the costs associated with responding to a cyber incident. These costs may include utilizing IT forensics to investigate the breach, restoring damaged systems, notifying affected customers and setting up call center services.

Legal costs - Such coverage can help pay for legal counsel to assist with any notification or regulatory obligations resulting from a cyber incident.

Data recovery costs - This coverage can help recover expenses related to reconstituting data that may have been deleted or corrupted during a cyber incident.

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Overview



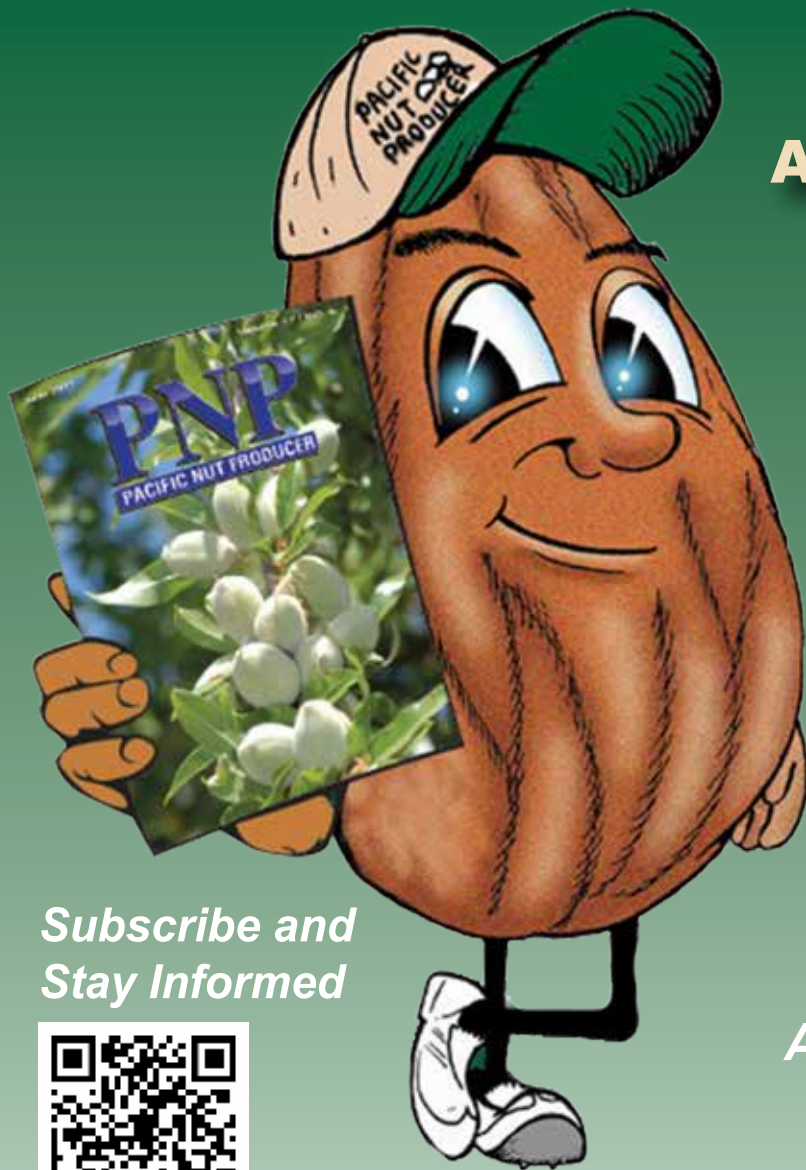
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First-Party Continued...

Business interruption losses - Such coverage can help reimburse lost profits or additional costs incurred due to the unavailability of IT systems or critical data amid a cyber incident.

Cyber extortion losses - This coverage can help pay costs associated with hiring extortion response specialists to evaluate recovery options and negotiate ransom payment demands (if applicable) during a cyber incident.

Reputational damage - Such coverage can help pay for crisis management and public relations services related to a cyber incident.

Third-Party Coverage

Third-party cyber insurance can provide financial protection for claims made, fines incurred, or legal action taken against an organization due to a cyber incident. Types of third-party coverage usually include the following:

Data privacy liability - This coverage can help recover the costs of dealing with third parties who had their information compromised during a cyber incident. These costs may include handling third-party lawsuits or legal disputes, offering credit-watch services and providing additional compensation.

Regulatory defense - Such coverage can help pay fines, penalties, and other defense costs related to regulatory action or privacy law violations stemming from a cyber incident.

Media liability - This coverage can help reimburse defense costs and civil damages resulting from defamation, libel, slander, and negligence allegations associated with the publication of content in electronic or print media. Multimedia liability coverage can also offer protection amid copyright, trademark, or intellectual property infringement incidents.

Overview

It's evident that cyber insurance can greatly assist organizations in avoiding significant financial losses during cyber incidents. It's recommended for organizations to consult with trustworthy insurance professionals to address their specific coverage needs. Contact us today for further guidance on cyber insurance and coverage solutions to fit your agricultural business needs.



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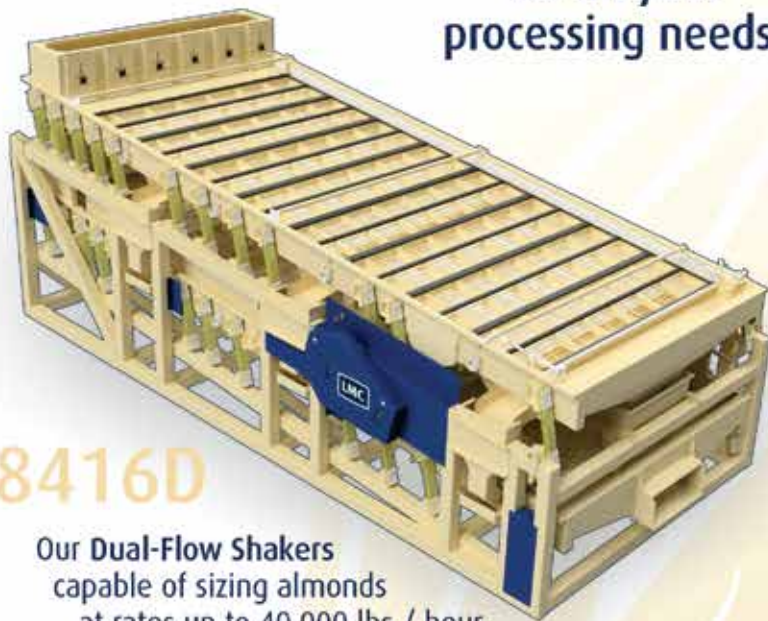
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NEW EMPLOYMENT LAWS FOR 2025

By: Stacy Henderson, Henderson Hatfield, A Professional Company

Every year, California employers are faced with new laws and cases that impact the day-to-day operation of their business. The following is a very brief summary of 5 noteworthy new California laws enacted in 2024, which go into effect on January 1, 2025. As there are many additional new laws that were enacted which may apply to your operation, and the law continues to evolve on an ongoing basis, every employer is well advised to consult with employment law counsel regarding modifications that must be made to their operation to ensure they remain compliant.

1. Restrictions on Requiring Applicants and Employees to Have a Driver's License. It is now unlawful for an employer to include statements indicating that a driver's license is required in job advertisements, postings, applications and other employment material (e.g., Employee Handbook) unless the following conditions have been satisfied:

- The employer reasonably expects driving to be 1 of the job functions of the position; and
- The employer reasonably believes that satisfying the job function of driving using an alternative form of transportation would not be comparable in travel time or cost to the employer. "Alternative form of transportation" can include, but is not limited to: ride-hailing services, carpooling, bicycling, walking and taxis.

Employers must now determine whether driving is actually a job function of each position and change the language in job postings, applications and Employee Handbook that refer to the requirement for a driver's license to include an appropriate reference to alternative forms of transportation.

2. Model List of Employee Rights and Responsibilities Required to be Posted - Every employee is protected from retaliation for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency, a person with authority over the employee or to another employee with authority to investigate, discover or correct the violation or non-compliance, or who provides information to or testifies before a public body conducting an investigation, hearing

or inquiry, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe the information discloses:

- A violation of a State or Federal statute;
- A violation or noncompliance with a local, State or Federal rule or regulation; or
- With reference to employee safety or health, unsafe working conditions or work practices in the employee's employment or place of employment

Employers are required to notify employees of their whistleblower protection by prominently displaying a list of the employees' rights and responsibilities under the whistleblower laws. California's Labor Commissioner is required to develop a model list of employee rights and responsibilities under the existing whistleblower laws, which employers should post starting January 1, 2025.

3. California Paid Sick Leave Use Expanded for Agricultural Employees - All employers must allow employees who work for the employer for a minimum of 30 days to take up to 5 days or 40 hours, whichever is more based on the number of hours the employee is regularly scheduled to work, of paid sick leave per year for the diagnosis, care or treatment of an existing health condition of, or preventative care for, the employee or the employee's qualifying family member, for an employee who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, and for other specified purposes. Agricultural employees who work outside can now request to also use paid sick leave to avoid smoke, heat or flooding conditions created by a local or State emergency, including, but not limited to, when the employee's worksite is closed as a result of the smoke, heat or flooding conditions. The term "Agricultural employees" is defined to include a person employed in a position governed by Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Order Nos. 8, 13 or 14.

4. Expanded List of Crimes and Circumstances Justifying Protected Leave - Employees who are victims, or have a family member who is a victim of a qualifying act of violence can take leave and request accommodations as follows:

- *All employers* are prohibited from discharging or discriminating or retaliating against an

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employee who is a victim or has a family member who is a victim from missing work for the following reasons:

- Appearing in court to comply with a subpoena or other court order as a witness in any judicial proceeding.
- To obtain or attempt to obtain any relief to ensure the health, safety or welfare of the victim or their child, including, but not limited to a temporary restraining order, restraining order or other injunctive relief.
- *All employers* must engage in the interactive process with any employee who is a victim or whose family member is a victim of a qualifying act of violence and who has requested a reasonable accommodation without causing an undue hardship on the employer's business operations and without violating the employer's duty to furnish and maintain a safe and healthful place of employment for all employees.
- Possible reasonable accommodations may include the implementation of safety measures, including a transfer, reassignment, modified schedule, changing work telephone or work station, permission to carry a telephone at work, installing locks, assisting an employee with documenting domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or other qualifying act of violence that occurs in the workplace, an implemented safety procedure, or another adjustment to a job structure, workplace facility or work requirement, or referral to a victim assistance organization.
- *Employers with 25+ employees* are prohibited from discharging or discriminating or retaliating against an employee who is a victim or *has a family member who is a victim* from missing work for multiple additional reasons.

“Qualifying Act of Violence” includes all of the following, regardless of whether anyone is arrested for, prosecuted or convicted of committing the crime:

- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault
- Stalking
 - An act, conduct or pattern of conduct that includes:

- An individual causing bodily injury or death to another;
- An individual who exhibits, draws, brandishes or uses a firearm or dangerous weapon with respect to another; or
- An individual who uses or makes a reasonably perceived or actual threat of use of force against another to cause physical injury or death.

Employers must revise the following policies in the Employee Handbook to include language covering the expanded protection: (a) Paid Sick Leave; and (b) Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Crime or Other Qualifying Act of Violence. Employers must also provide written notice to employees of these rights at the time of hire, to all employees annually, at any time upon request, and any time the employer becomes newly aware that an employee or an employee's family member is a victim

5. Employers Cannot Require Employees to Use Vacation Before Receiving Paid Family Leave Wage Replacement – Paid Family Leave (“PFL”) is *not a leave right*. Instead, PFL is a *wage replacement program administered by the EDD* that allows employees who need to take time off of work to care for a seriously ill family member, bond with a new child or participate in a qualifying event because of a family member's military deployment. PFL allows eligible employees to receive the benefit payments for up to 8 weeks, in the amount of approximately 60-70% of the employee's weekly wages earned 5 to 18 months before the employee's claim start date. Employees who have vacation time, paid sick leave, paid time off or a short-term or long-term disability plan available can supplement the amount of compensation they receive from PFL to earn up to 100% of the employee's normal weekly wages. Employers are no longer permitted to require employees to use 2 weeks of vacation before they start to receive PFL wage replacement benefits. To the extent that you have a policy that previously mandated the use of vacation before receipt of PFL benefits, the policy needs to be revised.

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