



Advocacy Report

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Blake Vann
Chair

Vann Family Orchards

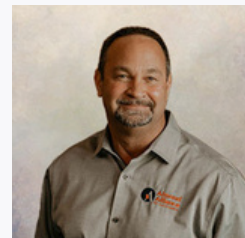


Katie Staack
Vice Chair

Grizzly Nut, LLC



Dick Cunningham
Chief Financial Officer
Cunningham Ranch, Inc.



Steve Koretoff
Secretary

Purity Organics, Inc.



Tom Carter
Harris Woolf Almonds



Lori Coburn
Campos Brothers
Farms



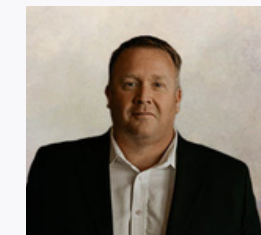
Robert Holterman
Double H Farms



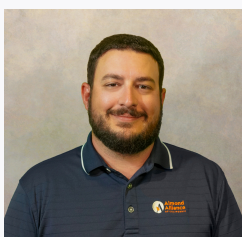
Bill Lyons
Mapes Ranch L.P.



Lisa Marroquin
Central Valley Almond
Association



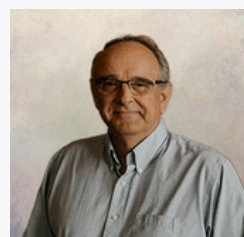
Todd Meyer
Bear Republic Nut



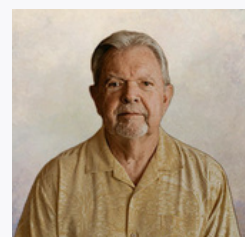
Alec Pacini
JSS Almonds



Bret Sill
Sill Properties



David Thiel
Cortez Grower
Association



John Wynn
Emeritus

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Farm Bill Progress

The Almond Alliance has been actively engaged in advocating for critical provisions within the Farm Bill, emphasizing the need for sustainable funding and effective risk management tools. As momentum builds for a comprehensive five-year farm bill during the lame-duck session, bipartisan support is evident, with key lawmakers like House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA) and Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA) pushing to finalize the bill before Congress adjourns. Despite previous disagreements, there is optimism that a bipartisan farm bill could be attached to essential legislation, such as the National Defense Authorization Act. The Almond Alliance continues to advocate for:

- Increased funding for Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program
- Enhancements to the Tree Assistance Program (TAP)
- Establishment of a Specialty Crop Advisory Committee within the Risk Management Agency
- Reauthorization of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) and Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)
- Inclusion of almonds in commodity marketing orders

Trade Initiatives

The Almond Alliance has been actively engaged in addressing international trade challenges affecting the almond industry. Almond Alliance has advocated for Congressional action on China's Decree 248, which has created difficulties in exporting to China. The Alliance is leading efforts to urge the administration to transfer the CIFER portal to the AMS to alleviate application bottlenecks. The organization is closely monitoring potential trade disputes, including concerns over proposed tariff strategies by political candidates that could lead to retaliatory measures from China and other trade partners. Through these actions, the Almond Alliance aims to foster a favorable trading environment and ensure the sustainability of the almond sector in the global market. Key trade-related activities include:

- Advocating for resolution of China's Decree 248 implementation issues
- Engaging with U.S. officials on tariff concerns
- Participating in the Congressional Ag Trade Caucus
- Monitoring potential port strikes and their impact on almond exports

Disaster Funding

The Almond Alliance has been actively advocating for disaster relief funding to support almond growers and farmers affected by natural disasters in 2023. They have worked closely with legislators, including Congressmen David Valadao and Jimmy Panetta, to introduce the bipartisan Agriculture Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, which aims to provide crucial support for farmers impacted by natural disasters in 2023.

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.

The Alliance has also been collaborating with a coalition of agricultural groups across California to ensure the bill addresses the specific needs of the almond industry. This initiative comes in

response to the significant challenges faced by California's agricultural sector, which suffered billions in damages and losses due to severe weather events in 2023 alone.

Invasive Species

The Almond Alliance is actively advocating for funding to combat invasive pests affecting the almond industry, yielding positive outcomes in the FY25 appropriations process despite challenges in passing the full Agriculture Appropriations Bill. The Almond Alliance continues to monitor negotiations closely as they work to secure vital funding for pest control initiatives.

- **Carpophilus Beetle Research:** The committee has encouraged the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to collaborate with state agricultural universities and industry stakeholders on pest detection and mitigation strategies. Congressman Vince Fong has also proposed a \$1 million funding increase for APHIS to research the *Carpophilus truncatus* beetle.
- **Navel Orangeworm Funding:** The committee allocated \$9,340,000 for research on the Navel Orangeworm and encouraged collaboration between ARS, APHIS, and industry stakeholders on the sterile moth pilot program.

Rules & Regulations

The Almond Alliance continues to be at the forefront of federal advocacy, ensuring that the almond industry's perspectives were not only heard but respected and considered in final regulatory decisions. The following are some of the more notable instances in 2024 where the Almond Alliance engaged its expertise:

- EPA published its Vulnerable Species Action Plan (replacing the Vulnerable Species Pilot Program). The program seeks to mandate efforts to reduce spray drift and/or run-off near the locations of the listed endangered species for all conventional pesticides. In the Central Valley, the Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew (southern SJV) and the Palmate-bracted Birds beak (plant) (spots in northern SJV and Sac Valley), are listed.
- EPA is updating the mapping for Pesticide Use Limitation Areas (PULAs).
- SEC adopted rules for climate related disclosures by public companies and in public offerings. The final rule stripped out a requirement to disclose so-called Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions, which would have primarily affected agriculture.
- USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service sought information on criteria to use in setting up guidelines for voluntary carbon markets for agriculture.
- EPA is updating the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Insecticide Strategy. Overall, the goal is to minimize the impacts of insecticides on endangered species and thereby to reduce the amount of consultation EPA would be required to do under the ESA. Depending on the relative toxicity and proximity to locations to listed species, a grower may need to implement various mitigation practices to reduce run-off and/or spray drift to meet the number of points assigned that pesticide use.
- EPA is updating the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Herbicide Strategy, assessing whether a pesticide could affect one or more of some 900 listed species. Based on herbicides impacts, different amounts of mitigation will be needed to use that particular product. Actual implementation is expected to be gradual, starting in 2025 when pesticides either undergo a new registration, new uses or registration review.
- EPA issued Proposed Interim Decisions (PID) for several chemical tools utilized by the almond industry: Ziram, Captan, Paragat, Mancozeb, and Phosphine
- EPA finalized updated worker protection standards. The update affects ground boom applications.

STATE LEGISLATION

California faced significant fiscal challenges in 2024, moving from a \$100 billion surplus to a projected \$68 billion budget deficit. Despite this, the Almond Alliance achieved several legislative victories for the almond industry.

Conservation and Environmental Flexibility

The Almond Alliance successfully advanced legislation allowing almond growers more flexibility in environmental conservation efforts without fear of regulatory penalties.

- **AB 1581 (Kalra):** Permits almond growers to participate in Conservation Benefit Agreements (CBAs) without regulatory repercussions. In partnership with the Wine Institute, this legislation protects landowners who implement conservation measures, supporting both environmental sustainability and operational flexibility.

Pesticide Regulation and Oversight

The Alliance worked to improve pesticide regulations, negotiating for greater transparency and accountability within the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

- **AB 2113 (Garcia):** Includes a “mill tax” increase but introduces new oversight requirements for DPR, including annual disclosures on processing times for reviewing and approving new pesticide registrations and amendments to improve DPR’s transparency and efficiency.

Pesticide Restrictions and Agricultural Exemptions

California legislators introduced bills to restrict specific pesticides, but the Almond Alliance helped negotiate critical exemptions for agricultural use.

- **AB 1963 (Friedman):** Addresses restrictions on paraquat use.
- **AB 2552 (Friedman):** Targets FGARs, specifically chlorophacinone and warfarin. The Alliance’s efforts led to an exemption for agricultural use of chlorophacinone and warfarin under AB 2552, while the ban on paraquat in AB 1963 was delayed pending DPR’s evaluation.

Pest Management and Invasive Species Control

The Alliance supported pest management legislation to address invasive species but faced challenges with the Governor’s veto on additional nuisance control measures.

- **AB 2509 (Kalra):** Requires the Invasive Species Council of California to prioritize integrated pest management for controlling established invasive species.
- **AB 2541 (Mathis):** Would have allowed county agricultural commissioners to levy fines against individuals maintaining land deemed a public nuisance, but this bill was vetoed by the Governor.

Climate Resilience and Infrastructure Funding

In collaboration with various stakeholders, the Almond Alliance supported a climate resilience bond act to address water, wildfire, drought, and air quality needs.

- **SB 867 (Allen):** Enacts the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, authorizing \$10 billion for resilience projects. If Proposition 4 passes, the LandFlex program, advocated by the Almond Alliance, would likely be prioritized among water-funded projects.

Environmental Restrictions

The Alliance opposed environmental legislation imposing restrictions on certain chemical products, as some bills included broader, restrictive provisions on agricultural products.

- **SB 903 (Skinner):** Would have banned products containing added PFAS unless the use is unavoidable. The bill was held in the Appropriations Committee.
- **SB 1143 (Allen):** Initially proposed a producer responsibility program for products containing household hazardous waste, including agricultural products. However, it was amended to apply only to paint products.

Electrification and Energy Transition

The Almond Alliance opposed electrification mandates that could impose additional costs on almond processors, advocating for industry considerations in energy legislation.

- **AB 1083 (Berman):** Sought to drive electrification by requiring the California Energy Commission (CEC) to assess emissions reductions from industrial heat processes. The Almond Alliance's opposition helped stall this bill in the Appropriations Committee.

Employment and Labor Policy

The Almond Alliance monitored and responded to employment-related legislation, focusing on emergency paid leave and protections for heat-related work injuries.

- **SB 1105 (Padilla):** Signed into law, relating to paid leave during emergencies.
- **SB 1299 (Cortese):** Proposed a presumption that heat-related injuries arose from employment but was ultimately vetoed by the Governor.

Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) Reform

Months of negotiations led to a reform package addressing lawsuit abuse, which had burdened many businesses. This reform package aims to protect compliant employers and streamline the claims process.

- **PAGA Reform Package:** Avoided a costly ballot initiative by introducing measures to expedite claim resolutions, protect compliant employers, allow an opportunity to cure violations, and strengthen labor law enforcement.

Food Insecurity and Health Benefits Advocacy

The Alliance supported food insecurity initiatives, using these opportunities to highlight the health benefits of almonds and advocate for almond-based solutions.

- **Food Insecurity Initiatives:** Supported by the Almond Alliance to showcase the nutritional value of almonds while promoting food security.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain Support

The Alliance advocated for legislation to enhance California ports and strengthen supply chain industries, contributing to hearings on port and goods movement improvements.

- **Supply Chain Advocacy:** Supported legislative efforts to improve California ports, all supply chain industries, and participated in the Select Committee on Ports and Goods Movement hearings.

Renewable Energy and Agricultural Flexibility

The Alliance backed initiatives supporting solar energy use for farms, allowing greater flexibility in energy sourcing, although not all proposed bills advanced.

- **SB 1374:** Proposed restoring net energy metering for farms utilizing solar energy but ultimately stalled.
- **AB 2661:** Authorizes the Westlands Water District to generate solar electricity and construct necessary facilities, including transmission lines and energy storage.
- **AB 2528 (Arambula):** Would have permitted Williamson Act cancellations for solar projects in areas of water scarcity. The bill stalled.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY

Almond Champion of the Year

The Almond Alliance proudly awarded Assemblymember Juan Alanis its *2024 Champion of the Year* award at the Annual Almond PAC Fundraiser. Assemblymember Alanis was recognized for his exceptional leadership and advocacy for California's almond industry. As the Vice Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, he served as a strong voice for the Almond Alliance, consistently demonstrating his dedication to the industry's growth and sustainability.



Almond Day 2024

Almond Day 2024 was a standout event, marked by proclamations in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C. In addition to securing these Almond Day proclamations, we successfully launched a state and federal Almond Caucus to strengthen relationships with legislators. Since then, we've collaborated with the caucus on key issues, including trade, disaster relief, and the Farm Bill. This relationship-building has been instrumental in garnering support for key issues such as the bipartisan *Agriculture Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act*.



Annual Convention

We gathered in Hawaii for the *42nd Annual Almond Alliance Convention*, hosted at The Royal Sonesta Kaua'i Resort on April 22-25, 2024. The successful event included Marian Tupy's dynamic keynote presentation, interactive networking opportunities, and sessions including:

- Employers' Guide to Fighting Lawsuits Filed by Employees
- Trade and Water: Driving Forces Shaking the Industry
- SGMA is Here to Stay - Now what?
- Saving Species, Saving Ourselves: A Deep Dive into the Endangered Species Act, Pollinators, and You
- and more!



Join us in San Diego in 2025!

Washington DC Fly-Out

In June, the Almond Alliance hosted its first official advocacy days in Washington, D.C., engaging key USDA officials, legislators, and policymakers to advance policies supporting the almond industry. The delegation's discussions centered on Farm Bill provisions, streamlining export processes by transferring CIFER Portal management from the FDA to USDA AMS, and addressing tariffs to boost global competitiveness for American almonds.



The Voice of American Almonds

The Almond Alliance is the leading authority in state and national policy, championing American almond farmers, industry, and community for the continued global growth, innovation, and success of American almonds and agriculture.

Almond PAC

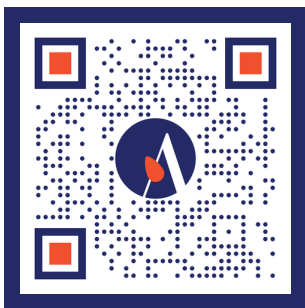
Created by the Almond Alliance in 2014, the California Almond Industry Political Action Committee (Almond PAC) protects our industry and promotes shared interests within the community. The Almond PAC capitalizes on individual contributions and collectively distributes them strategically to key candidates for Congressional and California statewide elections.

Pollinator Alliance

An Almond Alliance Initiative, Pollinator Alliance is a hub for California almond growers, providing resources and programs that protect, nurture, and promote our symbiotic relationship with pollinators. Learn more at [PollinatorAlliance.Farm](#).

Almond Alert

Almond Alert is the Almond Alliance's bi-monthly podcast bringing new thoughts, thinkers, ideas, and information to our almond community worldwide. Listen, or watch, on our favorite podcast platform!



**Learn More
About Us**

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