

December 14, 2023

Subject: Approve California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Member

Reporting Period: October 2023 – December 2023

Staff Lead: Sean Kennedy, Special Projects Analyst, SGC

Recommended Action

SGC staff recommend that Council appoint the nominee recommended by the CDFA BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee, Qi Zhou, to serve on the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force.

Summary

Per the enabling legislation, the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force (Task Force) shall consist of up to 13 members, including one individual from the California Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee. At the November 13 meeting, the California BIPOC Farmer Advisory Committee nominated Qi Zhou to serve on the Task Force.

Background

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force was established in the 2022 California Budget to develop recommendations to equitably increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional tribal agricultural uses. On or before January 1, 2026, the Task Force shall submit a report to the Legislature and Governor that includes policy recommendations on addressing the agricultural land equity crisis.

Per the Budget, the Task Force shall consist of a regionally diverse group of individuals of up to 13 members to be appointed by the Strategic Growth Council in consultation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Farm Equity Advisor and the California Truth and Healing Council. The task force shall consist of native and tribal liaisons, a land trust representative, individuals with expertise in issues affecting socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, an individual with expertise in agricultural land acquisition and finance, State Board of Food and Agriculture member, a farmworker representative, a beginning farmer, the CDFA Farm Equity Advisor, and an individual from the CDFA BIPOC Farmer Advisory Committee, which was in the process of being formally established when the enabling legislation was passed.

The CDFA BIPOC Farmer Advisory Committee was formally established in July 2023. At the Committee's first meeting on November 13, members approved the nomination of Qi Zhou, Equity Lead at the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, Sacramento Valley, to serve on the Task Force.

Next Steps

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force held its first meeting on October 30, 2023. The Task Force discussed proposed the bylaws and charter and nominated Nelson Hawkins and Emily Burgueno to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. The second meeting is tentatively scheduled for early February, 2024.

Council Recommendation

Should the Council agree with Staff's recommendation, the following motion language is suggested:

"I move that the Council pass the consent calendar."

Attachments

Attachment A: Bio – Qi Zhou