ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday – November 3, 2025
SLO County Agricultural Commissioner's Office – 2156 Sierra Way, UC Auditorium, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Members and Alternates Present: Dan Rodrigues, Sarah Kramer, Lisen Bonnier, Ron Harben (MS Teams), Jerry Diefenderfer, Jeff McKee, Paul Clark, Claire Wineman, Dylan Theobald

Staff Present: David Aguayo and Ian Landreth –Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures

Absent Members: Craig Pritchard, Hallie Richards, Daniel Jones

Guests Present: Eric Michielssen - USLTRCD, Patricia Wineman – Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance (MS Teams)

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I. Call to Order, introductions, quorum determination

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rodrigues at 5:06 p.m. There were enough members present to have a quorum.

II. Open Comment

Members wishing to address the ALAB on matters other than the scheduled items may do so at this time, when recognized by the Chairman.

Dan Rodrigues opened public comment.

Dan Rodrigues congratulated Sarah Kramer on receiving an award from the Farm Bureau.

Paul Clark explained that every year the Farm Bureau recognizes an individual who goes above and beyond the call of duty and gives so much time and effort to the agriculture community. The award Sarah received is called the Freddy Award. The award is named after the late Fred Righetti who was a mainstay on the Farm Bureau board and was a leader in every sense of the word.

Dan Rodrigues closed public comment.

III. Previous Minutes – September 2025

Thereafter on Motion to approve September 2025 minutes as presented by: Sara Kramer, Second by: Paul Clark, and on the following vote:

REPRESENTATIVE:	AYES:	NOES:	ABSTAIN:	RECUSE:
Dan Rodrigues	X			
Sarah Kramer	X			
Jerry Diefenderfer			X	
Paul Clark	X			
Jeff McKee	X			
Lisen Bonnier	X			
Claire Wineman	X			
Dylan Theobald	X			

The ALAB approved the September 2025, minutes.

Previous Minutes – October 2025

Thereafter on Motion to approve October 2025 minutes as presented by: Lisen Bonnier, Second by Jerry Diefenderfer, and on the following vote:

Dan Rodrigues	X			
Sarah Kramer	X			
Jerry Diefenderfer	X			
Paul Clark	X			
Jeff McKee	X			
Lisen Bonnier	X			
Claire Wineman	X			
Dylan Theobald	X			

The ALAB approved the October 2025, minutes.

IV. Discussion Items:

a. Biosolids discussion and development of action items

- David Aguayo noted they had contacted Environmental Health but had not received information on the department's position or anticipated action for March 2026. Aguayo stated this does not preclude ALAB from drafting comments, a position paper, or letter supporting continuation of the ordinance for another four years or forming a subcommittee to provide additional input.
- Claire Wineman expressed interest in writing a letter to the Board of Supervisors and recounted the ALAB's position taken at the last meeting in favor of prohibition or suggesting additional considerations.
- Paul Clark noted that the existing ordinance has effectively prohibited biosolid applications, with no permits issued since adoption, and suggested supporting either a formal prohibition or continuation of the current ordinance given the cost of an EIR.
- Jerry Diefenderfer questioned whether it may be premature to send a letter at this time, noting that the issue does not currently appear to be under active discussion elsewhere.
- Dan Rodrigues believed the intent was to have a comment letter prepared for the March 2026 expiration date of the current ordinance. He noted that the subcommittee could

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reconvene at any time to provide additional input or recommendations if new information was released leading up to the Board of Supervisors taking action on the ordinance.

- Claire Wineman mentioned that the ALAB's comments could be framed as intent by acknowledging that the ordinance will sunset in March 2026 but to emphasize the work to renew, revise, or replace the ordinance should begin sooner rather than later. Noting there may be future interest in allowing greater flexibility for biosolid applications but expressed concern that the food safety risks, including heavy metals and pathogens, remain too great based on recent research.
- Jerry Diefenderfer expressed the idea of identifying locations to receive biosolids.
- David Aguayo stated that submitting a letter would place ALAB's position on record ahead of any future action. Aguayo added that, based on the presentation from Environmental Health at the prior meeting, staff appeared to be early in their review of the issue and may ultimately support continuation of the existing ordinance.
- Jerry Diefenderfer asked for clarification as to whether there had been any applicants under the current ordinance. Ian Landreth and David Aguayo believed that there had been no applications based on Environmental Health's presentation last month.
- Claire Wineman if there was interest in including language acknowledging that some areas of the county may be more accepting of biosolid applications where impacts to watersheds are unlikely, and that they would be supportive but noted that applying such flexibility under a countywide ordinance could be difficult to implement.
- Ron Harben asked whether ALAB should first conduct a review of the latest research on biosolids before making any recommendations.
- Dan Rodrigues expressed support for moving forward with establishing a subcommittee and preparing a draft letter, noting that ALAB's position could be revised later if significant new information on biosolids becomes available.
- Claire Wineman referenced the FDA's Closer to Zero initiative, noting its increasingly strict standards for pathogens and heavy metals. Wineman stated that the food safety environment has become much more stringent in recent years, heightening concern among producers about potential liability and the risks associated with biosolid applications.
- Paul Clark emphasized that while food safety remains the most immediate concern, regulatory trends from the State Water Resources Control Board should also be considered. Clark noted that although current focus is on nitrogen management, future expansion of regulatory scope is likely, and expressed preference for exploring long-term, regional or multi-county processing solutions as a more effective approach for agriculture.
- Claire Wineman noted that the State Water Resources Control Board has adopted a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for E. coli in the Santa Maria watershed, including Alamo Creek, which affects portions of San Luis Obispo County. Wineman stated this demonstrates that concerns about future regulatory expansion are well-founded. Wineman also asked if the motion should include having 3CE include a cogen facility for biosolids. Liesen Bonnier noted that details on the cogen facility could be discussed at the ad hoc committee.

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Thereafter on Motion by Claire Wineman, Second by Sarah Kramer, and on the following vote:

Dan Rodrigues	X			
Sarah Kramer	X			
Jerry Diefenderfer	X			
Paul Clark	X			
Jeff McKee	X			
Lisen Bonnier	X			
Claire Wineman	X			
Dylan Theobald	X			

The ALAB approved forming an ad hoc committee to draft a letter to the Board of Supervisors and Environmental Health outlining the food safety and other practical concerns for agricultural operations related to biosolids either in support of prohibition or continuation of the interim ordinance as written. As well as recognizing the community's contribution to the generation of biosolids.

The members to include:

- Claire Wineman
- Paul Clark
- Dan Rodrigues

b. Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD representative (Eric Michielssen) ALAB Vote

- David Aguayo introduced the item to the ALAB. The upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD Board of Directors nominated Eric Michielssen to serve as their representative. The item was scheduled for discussion and a recommendation vote.
- There was discussion on the process as to whether or not a vote was needed from the ALAB in order for the Board of Supervisors to appoint Michielssen. It was determined that ALAB did not have to vote to recommend the appointment of a representative who was nominated by their respective organization. The Department of Agriculture would proceed with including the recommendation to appoint Michielssen to the Board of Supervisors at the next available Board meeting.

V. Updates from Ag Department Staff.

- Ian Landreth reported that the County Department of Groundwater Sustainability is developing a Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Multi-Benefit Irrigated Land Repurposing ("MILR") Program and a Fallowed Land Registry platform to encourage voluntary land fallowing or conversion to less water-intensive uses. Landreth noted that, at the Agricultural Preserve Review Committee (APRC) meeting earlier that day, the Committee recommended amendments to the Rules of Procedure to Implement the Land Conservation Act to protect Williamson Act contract holders who voluntarily participate in the MILR Program from being penalized or forced into non-renewal. The proposed new footnote (11) would clarify how

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long participants remain exempt from certain contract requirements. While staff had proposed finite timelines for that exemption, the APRC voted to remove the criteria for how long someone was able to fallow the land before being out of compliance to allow greater flexibility, citing changing conditions in the wine industry and the need to maintain incentives for voluntary participation.

VI. Future agenda items/meeting dates, adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 PM. The next monthly ALAB meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2025.

Respectfully submitted by Ian Landreth, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures.

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