

County of San Luis Obispo

Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board

2156 Sierra Way, Suite A, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401



**Agricultural Liaison
Advisory Board (ALAB)**

Positions/Members/Terms

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VICE CHAIR: Sarah Kramer

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County Agricultural Commissioner
Marty Settevendemie

Ex-Officio

U.C. Coop. Extension, Farm Advisor
Christopher Greer

Ex-Officio

DATE: February 5, 2026

TO: San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: ALAB Recommendation on Biosolids Proposed Ordinance Amending Chapter 8.13 of the San Luis Obispo County Code Concerning Land Application of Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids

Honorable Supervisors,

Since its original passage in 2003, the Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board (ALAB) has supported a prohibition of **ALL LAND APPLICATION** of biosolids in San Luis Obispo County. ALAB has supported the County's approach to regulating biosolid land application through the existing ordinance in Chapter 8.13.

Today, these restrictions have become even more critical for two reasons: first, potential liability resulting from potential per - and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS has been found in even "Exceptional Quality" biosolids. Farmers and ranchers downstream of property with applied biosolids have no protection from future contamination or potential liability resulting from that contamination. Regarding irrigated farming operations, regulations handed down by the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards have become consistently more stringent. Having to answer for future biosolid contaminants would be ruinous to any farming operation.

Maintaining the prohibition on the land application of biosolids in San Luis Obispo County is a vital safeguard for the region's premier agricultural industry, particularly for high-value fresh produce that is generally consumed raw. While federal standards offer a baseline, they do not align with the increasingly stringent market and regulatory requirements that define modern food safety. As the US FDA advances its "Closer to Zero" initiative for the food supply, the potential introduction of heavy metals and persistent contaminants like PFAS via biosolids presents an unacceptable risk to the soil and future crops grown on the lands. These concerns are echoed by the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA), which includes additional risk assessments related to biosolids, including assessments of adjacent and nearby land uses for biosolids, and lists the following best practice: "Do not use biosolids as a soil amendment for production of lettuce and leafy greens or as an ingredient for soil amendments and crop inputs used

for lettuce and leafy greens production.” Land that is not currently under cultivation for fresh produce may move into cultivation at a later time or may have downstream, windborne, or hydrological impacts to other growing locations. By upholding the local moratorium, San Luis Obispo County protects growers and consumers and ensures that local produce remains synonymous with safety and quality in a competitive global market.

ALAB encourages the Board of Supervisors to extend the interim moratorium by passing the ordinance amending Chapter 8.13 of the County Code by keeping the 5 year term rather than the proposed 3 year term. Furthermore, ALAB would support a permanent prohibition. We also encourage the County to consider Regional, multi-county solutions to safely and effectively address sewage sludge needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Rodrigues", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Dan Rodrigues
ALAB Chair
dan@vinaquest.com