



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 3
File #: 22-390

Board Meeting Date: 6/14/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Don Horsley, Supervisor District 3
Subject: Establishment of the San Mateo County Farmworker Advisory Commission

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution establishing the San Mateo County Farmworker Advisory Commission.

BACKGROUND:

A number of boards and commissions perform specific County government functions or advise the Board of Supervisors on a variety of issues. Some of these commissions-including, for example, the Veterans' Commission and the LGBTQ Commission-focus on policy matters and issues of interest to specific segments of the population within San Mateo County.

The agriculture industry is a major component of the San Mateo County economy. According to a 2019 Needs Assessment conducted by the County's Healthcare for the Homeless and Farmworker Health (HCH/FH) Program, there are approximately 80 farms in the County, and they employ between 1,300-1,600 farmworkers. Yet many of these farmworkers have unmet needs and require support on issues such as employment, working conditions, immigration, healthcare, education, accessing safety net services, and affordable housing.

Aside from HCH/FH, which is focused solely on providing healthcare to farmworkers, no County program exists to specifically promote the needs of farmworkers and their families, or to recommend programs, plans, and policies that would help farmworkers access benefits and services and address their unmet needs.

DISCUSSION:

The Farmworker Advisory Commission ("Commission") would promote programs and policies that address the unmet needs of farmworkers in San Mateo County. Potential areas of focus include:

- Helping farmworkers and their families navigate public agencies and access benefits and services and advising the Board of Supervisors and County agencies on effectively outreaching to farmworkers and their families;

- Raising awareness among farmworkers of labor laws and other protections;
- Building trust and relationships in the agricultural community, particularly between employers and employees;
- Bringing visibility to issues that disproportionately affect farmworkers;
- Developing policy recommendations that would increase access to benefits and services for farmworkers;
- Enhancing the reputation of the County's agricultural industry as an attractive place to work.

The Commission would have ten voting members appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve three-year terms, though initial terms would be staggered. The Commission would meet at least six times a year, implement an annual work plan, and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors at least once a year.

The member roster would include:

- Three representatives from designated community-based organizations that target and benefit the County's farmworker population, such as the following organizations: Coastside Hope, Ayudando Latinos A Soñar (ALAS), and Puente de la Costa Sur;
- Four farmworkers;
- One family member of a farmworker;
- One member from the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee; and
- One representative from the agricultural industry who is not a farmworker.

Due to the nature of their work, it may be difficult to recruit and retain farmworker members, who may have constraints on their ability to attend regular meetings, notwithstanding that their participation is critical to the Commission's success. To support farmworker member recruitment and retention, all commission members who are farmworkers or a farmworker family member will be paid \$100 for each Commission meeting they attend.

The Office of Community Affairs will serve as the Commission's administrative liaison. Staff support will include:

- Support from one staff member from the Office of Community Affairs Immigration Services program, estimated 15-20 hours per month;
- Support from one staff member from the Health Care for the Homeless/Farmworker Health program, as needed; and
- Translation and interpreter services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Startup costs and operating expenses to support the Farmworker Advisory Commission are estimated to be \$75,000 and have been included in the County Executive's Office FY 2022-23 Recommended Budget.