



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 3
File #: 22-757

Board Meeting Date: 10/4/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: President Don Horsley, District 3
Subject: Appointments to the Farmworker Advisory Commission
(New Commission)

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation for appointments to the new Farmworker Advisory Commission:

- A) Nicolas Romero-Gonzalez, representing Farmworker, for an initial term ending September 30, 2025 and
- B) Rogelio Nabor-Martinez, representing Farmworker for an initial staggered partial term ending September 30, 2024; and
- C) Yolanda Guzman Calderon, representing Farmworker for an initial term ending September 30, 2025; and
- D) Yesenia Garcia, representing Farmworker for an initial staggered term ending September 30, 2024; and
- E) Jacqueline Nabor-Gomez, representing Family Member for an initial term ending September 30, 2025; and
- F) Corina Rodriguez Perez, representing Community-Based Organization for an initial staggered term ending September 30, 2024; and
- G) Stephanie Perez, representing Community-Based Organization for an initial term ending September 30, 2025; and
- H) Judith Guerrero, representing Community-Based Organization for an initial staggered term ending September 30, 2024; and

- I) Jonatan Ramirez, representing Agricultural Industry for an initial term ending September 30, 2025; and
- J) John Vars, representing San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee for an initial staggered term ending September 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

On June 14, 2022, the Board of Supervisors established the San Mateo County Farmworker Advisory Commission (Resolution No. 078906). 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.

This ten-member Commission promotes programs and policies that address the unmet needs of farmworkers in San Mateo County. Potential areas of focus include: advising the Board of Supervisors and County agencies on effectively outreaching to farmworkers and their families; helping farmworkers and their families navigate public agencies and access benefits and services; raising awareness among farmworkers about labor laws and other protections; bringing visibility to issues that disproportionately affect farmworkers; and helping to build trust and relationships in the County's agricultural community, particularly between employers and employees.

Persons must be a resident of San Mateo County and be a member of one of the following groups: four (4) farmworkers, three (3) representatives from a designated community-based organization that targets and benefits the County's farmworker population; 1 (one) family member of a farmworker; 1 (one) member from the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee; and 1 (one) representative from the agricultural industry who is not a farmworker.

DISCUSSION:

Nicolas Romero-Gonzalez is an agricultural engineer who has lived in the United States for 16 years. He worked in the agricultural industry in Kentucky and later worked for Caltrain in California. Now he works for a nursery in Pescadero, and is interested in making sure the farmworkers are doing well economically, with their health, and that their workers' rights are respected.

Rogelio Nabor-Martinez wants to give some of his time to help other people so that what he has experienced does not happen to them. Since his arrival in the United States, he has always worked on farms, and feels like many times he was abused by the bosses and stewards. He wants to make people understand that in any job we are all equal no matter what position we hold. He would like for bosses to treat their

employees like partners because if the boss or steward treats workers well, they will do better in the assigned work.

Yolanda Guzman Calderon is a farmworker and knows about the needs that exist for farmworkers. She has worked in agriculture for more than 10 years and has worked at different farms, as well as been a volunteer at her children's school. The issues she would like to help with are access to water for farmworkers. At her ranch there is access to a water faucet, but the water does not taste good. She is also interested in advocating for other services like paid vacation for farmworkers, even for just one or two days a year.

Yesenia Garcia has been a farmworker for over 10 years. She loves the work she does; she loves farming. She can bring a good perspective as a farmworker and she cares about her coworkers and farmworkers in general. She knows about the needs the farmworkers have.

Jacqueline Nabor-Gomez grew up in Pescadero, CA, a town that is known for its agriculture. Her father is a farmworker and has told her about the obstacles he has faced and that other workers have faced like poor wages, healthcare issues, and basic human rights. The reason she wants to advocate for improvement among farm workers is her father's experiences. Her goal is to one day become a lawyer, to educate herself on equal rights for all, and be a resource for her community.

Corina Rodriguez Perez is a proud daughter of hardworking immigrant parents from Mexico who obtained their lawful permanent residency through the Immigration Reform and Contract Act of 1986. Her strong interest in serving on the Farmworkers Advisory Commission is rooted in her deep care and love for the community where she and her family have built their lives for three generations now. She understands the depth of sacrifices that her parents made to give her and her siblings as many opportunities as possible to build better lives. She decided to work alongside the dedicated staff at Puente de la Costa Sur, so she can advocate for and give back to farmworkers and their families in the south coast of San Mateo County. Currently she oversees Puente's immigration and safety net services. As a Pescadero community member and Puente employee she has established collaborative relationships with local community organizations and farm and nursery employees and owners. She has a BA in Collaborative Health and Human Services with a Minor in Public Administration from California State University Monterey Bay.

Judith Guerrero is the current Executive Director of Coastside Hope, a County Core Agency dedicated to serving the population of the Midcoast including Half Moon Bay, El Granada, and Montara. She has a Bachelor of Science from San Jose State University, and a Master's in Public Administration from Notre Dame de Namur University. She was born in Mexico and am passionate about helping farmworkers and immigrants in the community reach their full potential. She is excited to continue this work as a member of the Commission.

Stephanie Perez is currently the Community Outreach Manager at Catholic Charities SF, Center for Immigration and Legal Support Services, as such she is constantly in the

community giving presentations about services and the rights of immigrants. Not only was she born and raised in San Mateo County, but specifically Half Moon Bay which has a large farmworker population due to all the agriculture. She is very passionate about advocating for immigrants as she knows firsthand, being a daughter of immigrants, how difficult it is not only for those who are undocumented, but also documented. She is very interested in working alongside farmworkers and to be a voice for them within the government to provide equality and equity for such an important group to the community.

Jonatan Ramirez is interested in joining the Farmworker Advisory Commission because it is his hope to gain a greater understanding of our community. He is an employee of Rocket Farms, Inc., whose voice is important as it employs one of the largest groups of farmworkers in the County. In his current role as occupational safety and food safety manager, he maintains constant interaction with employees, customers, suppliers, neighbors, and regulatory departments. He was born in Mexico and his family immigrated to the Central Coast as farm laborers in 1992. He has spent his life in agriculture, and would like this opportunity to connect with peers, fellow individuals with whom he can work and learn. He believes few things in life foster the feeling of belonging better than working together with others.

John Vars is a graduate of Brown University in Geology and Latin American Studies, where through an awareness of environmental and development issues he developed a profound interest in sustainable agriculture. He studied organic farming practices at the UCSC Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) for two years. He managed Green Oaks Creek Farm near Año Nuevo in 2004 and 2005, and went on to manage the farm at the Esalen Institute for two seasons, teaching the basics of organic farming to dozens of interns, before starting Fifth Crow Farm. He is fluent in Spanish and loves working with the Fifth Crow's growing crew of Spanish speakers. He also enjoys the opportunity to mentor the young people who have come to Fifth Crow Farm in hopes of one day starting their own farm business. John has served on the Agricultural Advisory Committee since 2017 and is representing said committee on the Farmworker Advisory Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.