



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 3
File #: 23-713

Board Meeting Date: 9/12/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Ray Mueller, District 3
Supervisor Warren Slocum, District 4
Subject: Appointment to the Farmworker Advisory Commission

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation for the appointment of Judith Guerrero to the Farmworker Advisory Commission, representing Family Member, for an initial partial term ending September 30, 2025.

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:

Judith Guerrero was initially appointed to the Commission at its inception in October 2022 to represent a Community-Based Organization (CBO) seat. Since then, an unexpected vacancy occurred for the Family member seat, formerly held by Jacqueline Nabor-Gomez who has resigned. Judith is being recommended to fill the family member seat, which carries an existing term ending September 30, 2025.

Judith Guerrero's grandparents immigrated to the United States in the 1980's to work on a farm picking artichokes, peas, and brussel sprouts. Judith and her mother immigrated to Half Moon Bay in the 1990's. Upon their arrival, Judith's mother immediately joined the workforce as a farmworker in a small farm on Highway 92. She has worked at this farm for over 30 years. When Judith was starting high school, they moved to live on the farm where her mother worked since the previous tenant moved out. For about five years, they lived at the back of the greenhouses closer to the creek, not visible from the main road until her grandparents decided to retire and move back to Mexico. Judith had to move with her mother back to Half Moon Bay. Her stepfather was also a farmworker and lived out of a small room in a home with four other families. While attending college, Judith also worked at the flower shop in the farm where her mother was working until Judith graduated college. Judith believes that her life's journey has been connected to the farm industry in this country. She has been a resident of the coast since the 1990's. Before working for Coastside Hope, she worked for the Boys & Girls Club of the Coastside serving families of farmworkers with similar journeys to hers. Judith's mother continues to work at the small farm on highway 92. Judith is passionate about helping farmworkers and immigrants in the community reach their full potential.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.