ALLIANCE OF PEST CONTROL DISTRICTS
22847 Road 140, Tulare, California

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE at 22847 Road 140, Tulare (APCD office):

Commissioners: John N. Fisher IV and John Corkins *(Kern County Citrus PCD – KCCPCD)*
Jim Zimmerman and Steve Scarbrough *(Southern Tulare County Citrus PCD – STCCPCD)*
James McKinney and Jay Gillette *(Central Valley PCD – CVPCD)*
Milo Gorden and Jeff Steen *(Tulare County PCD – TCPCD)*

Staff: Dr. Subhas Hajeri, Managing Director; Mia Neunzig, Administrative Manager; Dr. Saurabh Gautam, Field Manager; Ron Carter, Field Supervisor; Jose Pena, Field Supervisor/QAL; and Hailey Jones, Administrative Assistant

Other: Judy Zaninovich, Kern ACP/HLB Grower Liaison; Lisa Finke, Canine Detection Services CEO; Sam Lok, Pinnacle Technology; Christopher Greer, Assistant Tulare County Ag Commissioner/Sealer

ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM:
Commissioners: None.

Other: Jessica Leslie, Tulare County Grower Liaison; Libby Ouellette, Fresno County Deputy Ag Commissioner/Sealer; Cerise Montanio, Agricultural Protection Deputy Director of Kern County; Curtis Pate, Imperial County PCD Manager/Grower Liaison; Fabian Velasco, CDFA

Absent Commissioners: None.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fisher IV called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

All in attendance identified themselves.

OPEN SESSION:

Public Comments: None.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, February 19th, 2025

It was moved by Commissioner Corkins, seconded by Commissioner McKinney, to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 19th, 2025, as presented. The motion carried with all in attendance voting AYE.

Review and Approve the Budget Proposal for FY 2025-2026

Administrative Manager Mia Neunzig reviewed the Budget. A conversation ensued amongst Commissioners about how the budget was balanced, the remaining treasury fund balances, and the potential continuance of the LREC protection program. Kern County ACP/HLB Grower Liaison Judy Zaninovich gave a brief history of the LREC protection program.

It was moved by Commissioner Corkins, seconded by Commissioner Gillette, to approve the Budget Proposal for FY 2025-2026, as presented. The motion carried with all in attendance voting AYE.

Review and Approve 2025 Effective Plan

This item was rescheduled to be discussed at a future time.

CPDPC and PCD Meeting Review

Managing Director Dr. Subhas Hajeri discussed the meetings that took place between the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), APCD, and various pest control districts (PCDs) across the state. The discussions focused on identifying overlapping work and the willingness of PCDs to assume some responsibilities that CDFA had previously managed in their respective regions.

Dr. Hajeri presented data shared with CDFA, which included assessed acreage, total land acreage, and assessment rates. He also provided a list of current activities conducted by CDFA or contracted to county agricultural departments. Dr. Hajeri stated that the goal is for the PCDs to adopt commercial activities from CDFA, such as trapping, treatment, inspections, and outreach. A discussion ensued among members on topics including commercial versus residential citrus responsibilities, jurisdictions, contract lengths, and general state practices.

Departmental Operations:

Field Activities and Laboratory Activities for Fall 2024

Field Manager Dr. Saurabh Gautam presented a report on field activities, including mapping progress and Multi-Pest Inspections.

Field Supervisor Ron Carter gave an update on commercial Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) trapping. Carter stated that the trapping program was projecting 20,494 traps serviced through the spring season, set to close on June 19th. Carter reviewed the off-season winter trapping and discussed the non-citrus trap sites located at different weigh stations, travel corridors, and rest stops. Gautam continued by stating that ACP had not been found on any traps serviced within the PCD's boundaries. However, there have been several instances of ACP detections on traps located in Ventura along Highway 126, as well as an ACP detection on a trap located on the northbound side of the I-5 weigh station. Gautam reported that all ACPs were extracted from traps and tested for CLas (HLB.) All ACP tests have been negative. A question was raised about the quality of ACP samples and their ability to provide accurate HLB test results. Gautam explained that APCD requested CLas-infected ACPs ("Hot Psyllids") from Dr. Kris Godfrey at UC Davis to run bulk tests with multiple ACPs to determine the limit of detection.

Gautam moved on to discuss Multi-Pest Inspection activities. Local growers had reached out to APCD to collect samples from their properties and test for Citrus tristeza virus (CTV.) A discussion ensued on sour orange rootstock and the need for education on it.

Hajeri stated that ACP samples were received from Imperial County PCD manager and Grower Liaison, Curtis Pate to be tested for CLas. All were negative.

Hajeri announced that the APCD collaborated with the USDA-APHIS-PPQ lab in Maryland to test a new technology they developed. A total of 18 blind samples were sent to the lab for analysis, and the results were compared to APCD's PCR outcomes. The two methods showed a 100% match in results. Budwood, infected with Spiroplasma citri (citrus stubborn disease), was sent to a separate lab in Maryland so that they could clone the sample and maintain a culture for their research purposes.

Hajeri stated that the screenhouse project was nearing completion, with the final set of trees scheduled for removal. He noted that significantly less stem pitting was observed in the screenhouse compared to the controlled greenhouse study, attributing this difference to the extreme temperature fluctuations common in California's Central Valley. The data had been shared with Dr. Ray Yokomi's USDA lab in Parlier.

Hajeri then gave a summary of his attendance at the International Organization of Citrus Virologists (IOCV) conference in Australia, where he gave presentations on CTV and Citrus yellow vein clearing virus (CYVCV).

Hajeri moved on to discuss outreach activities that APCD had participated in, including having a booth at the California Citrus Mutual (CCM) Spring Citrus Showcase, presenting at Simplot Grower meetings, attending CCM grower meetings, and participating in scientific conferences.

Hajeri then updated the board that the APCD pest control business license was in good standing and Field Supervisor Jose Pena was maintaining his Qualified Applicators License (QAL).

Administrative Activities

Review APCD Performance to Budget for FY 24-25

Neunzig reviewed the report.

Review Income and Expenses: February 2025 and March 2025

Neunzig reviewed the report.

Review and Ratify Warrant List: February 2025 and March 2025

Neunzig reviewed the report.

It was moved by Commissioner Corkins, seconded by Commissioner Steen, to approve the Warrant List for February and March 2025, as presented. The motion carried, with all in attendance voting AYE.

Reports:

Ag Commissioner Updates

Assistant Tulare County Ag Commissioner/Sealer Christopher Greer gave a brief update. He reported that residential treatments for the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) had begun in the city of Visalia, with hopes of expanding to Tulare. Bulk citrus load inspections are set to continue. Most notice of violations (NOV's) were due to large holes/tears present in tarps or not having the tarp applied correctly to fully cover citrus loads. There have been zero ACP finds to date for the year 2025. Greer announced that Assembly Bill AB-732—essentially an abatement bill—was making a comeback. The bill would grant County Ag Commissioners increased authority in the abatement process.

Fresno County Deputy Ag Commissioner/Sealer Libby Ouellette reported that since October 2024, the bulk citrus regulatory program has completed 600 inspections of transporters. There was a rate of about 4% NOV's. Most issues were considered minor violations, such as incorrectly applied tarps or paperwork errors. She announced that one ACP trapping position would be eliminated, and the number of trap sites within Fresno County would be reduced. Bulk citrus contracts would also be reduced for the next year, which would affect the county's ability to check paperwork at packing houses. The county office planned to adjust along the way to ensure a smooth transition.

APCD Administrative Manager Mia Neunzig presented a report on behalf of Cerise Montanio, Deputy Director of Kern County Agricultural Protection. Montanio reported that in Kern County, they had expended 70% of their contract during the heavy part of their season, and it had begun slowing down. To date, they have issued compliance agreements to five growers, 12 transporters, and 24 farm labor contractors. More than 400 transporters had been inspected, with only two NOV's issued. 51% of the ACP detection contract had been expended. The current FY 24-25 contract had been reduced a few times, ultimately from $470,000 to $390,000. The county Ag office submitted their proposed budget to CDFA for FY 25-26 and was asked to further reduce it to $360,000. They have hopes to continue providing the same level of service even in the face of budget cuts.

LREC Vector Control Coordinator Update

Kern County ACP/HLB Grower Liaison Judy Zaninovich and Tulare County Grower Liaison Jessica Leslie gave their presentations earlier in the meeting.

CDFA Updates

Fabian Velasco of CDFA presented it on behalf of Jennifer Willems. There were no new ACP detections in the Central Valley since the last APCD meeting in February 2025. Two new trees tested positive for HLB in Santa Paula, Ventura County, bringing the new total up to 89 trees.

CCM Updates

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Fisher IV adjourned the meeting at 2:12 p.m.

John N. Fisher IV, Chairman

Mia Neunzig, Recording Secretary/Admin. Manager