



The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President Pro Tempore
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

Sent via email:

June 5, 2023

Re: SUPPORT – Newsom Administration Infrastructure Package: Build California's Clean Future, Faster

To Speaker Rendon, Assemblymember Ting, Senator Pro Tem Atkins, and Senator Skinner:

On behalf of the Almond Alliance, we are writing to express our strong support for the Newsom Administration's proposed infrastructure package to accelerate critical clean infrastructure projects that meet state social, climate, and economic goals. These proposals maintain the integrity of appropriate environmental review, government transparency, and community engagement.

The Almond Alliance is an association that serves as the almond industry's advocacy voice, promoting policy solutions for the sustainability and success of the almond community. The Almond Alliance represents the 7,600 growers and 100+ processors of almonds in California. Virtually 100% of U.S. commercial almond production is in California; this production also represents over 80% of the global supply. Almonds are grown on some 1.6 mill acres within the Central Valley and the 2021 production was 2.9 billion lbs, generating \$19.6 billion in revenue to the state and powered by the hundreds of thousands of jobs in our industry and community.

The almond industry has seen firsthand how extreme events caused by climate change, particularly flooding and drought, pose unprecedented challenges to the State's infrastructure. When the state was experiencing drought, the Almond Alliance proactively developed a program by which our farmers could fallow land in near drought-stricken communities to help conserve water to protect the state's shrinking groundwater supply. In times of floods, and as we look towards the "Big Melt," our members pursue techniques to maximize groundwater recharge across our farms and orchards. To avoid continuing **reactive** measures, California needs **permanent** solutions for water scarcity, conveyance, and above and below-ground storage to achieve a sustainable and resilient water management system.

Building a resilient electrical grid, especially in the Central Valley where our farmers are located, is critical for the Almond Alliance. To meet the upcoming requirements in the regulations passed by the California Air Resources Board relative to clean trucks and clean

agricultural equipment such as tractors and harvesters, the Central Valley will need a robust grid to efficiently integrate and distribute the generated electricity.

Transportation infrastructure plays a crucial role in facilitating the movement of agricultural products, including almonds, to ports across the state for export. As leaders in supply chain solutions, pioneering a multimodal strategy, highway and road improvements, rail transportation investments and enhancements, improving intermodal facilities near almond production regions, and the enhancement of port infrastructure are all examples of projects that could improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance the competitiveness of almond exports in global markets.

Tackling this climate crisis and continuing California's legacy as a global socio-economic leader necessitate urgent action and deployment of clean projects to meet our world-leading climate goals, build a clean and resilient electric grid, strengthen California's water resiliency, and modernize the state's clean transportation infrastructure.

California has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leverage federal funding to invest in California's clean infrastructure, grow the state's economy, and create thousands of good-paying jobs. Yet major infrastructure projects are too often bogged down in overly onerous regulatory processes and a siloed approach to permitting approvals, which increases overall costs and delays critical projects. In order to streamline permitting and build infrastructure responsibly and expeditiously, the Administration is proposing thoughtful, common-sense reform measures to streamline regulatory and review processes so projects can be planned, permitted, and built faster while protecting the environment. Importantly, these proposals provide unique streamlining benefits under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to advance climate-friendly projects without reducing the environmental and government transparency benefits of the environmental review process.

For these reasons, we are in strong support of the Administration's infrastructure package to build California's clean future, faster.

Sincerely,



Aubrey Bettencourt
President & CEO
Almond Alliance

CC:

Asm Transportation Chair, Asm. Laura Friedman
Asm Water, Parks, Wildlife Chair, Asm. Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Asm Natural Resources Chair, Asm. Luz Rivas
Asm Judiciary Chair, Asm. Brian Maienschein
Sen. Natural Resources and Water Chair, Dave Min
Sen. Judiciary Chair, Tom Umberg
Sen. Transportation, Lena Gonzalez