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Assembly California Legislature



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June 18, 2025

Gregory L. Ferraro, DVM
Chairman
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Re: The Big Fresno Fair Application for Racing Dates in 2025

Dear Chairman Ferraro:

As the Assemblywoman for California's 27th Assembly District, I write in support of The Big Fresno Fair and its Board of Directors' request for approval by the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB) to host a 2025 live race meet between September 17 – October 7, in service to our Central Valley community and to benefit the owners, trainers, breeders, horsemen, and racing fans throughout Northern California.

The Big Fresno Fair is requesting a total of seven (7) days of racing: September 19 – 21, 26 – 28, and October 1. The timing of the live horse race meet will help attract a large number of horses from Washington and Wyoming, as well as California. These horses are primarily Thoroughbreds that left the State of California due to the closure of Pleasanton as a Training Facility earlier this year, which is between 400 – 500 horses. This meet will be named: *The Big Fresno Fair Race Meet Sponsored by John Harris & Bernal Park Racing, LLC*.

In 2024, The Big Fresno Fair successfully marketed 14 days of live horse racing – seven held prior to the Fair and seven during the Fair – drawing enthusiastic crowds. The event's strong attendance and \$3.2 million in on-track handle demonstrated both the demand for racing in our region and the strength of The Big Fresno Fair's outreach. For 2025, The Big Fresno Fair proposes a similarly strategic campaign to support the requested race dates leading up to the Fair, with a final race day on Opening Day to build momentum into Fair season.

The Fair's Board of Directors and their experienced leadership team excels at producing dynamic racing experiences that engage both bettors and families, creating an atmosphere that is both festive and rooted in tradition. Horse racing holds a deep

and lasting place in the heart of the Central Valley, and this meet represents more than just dates on a calendar – it is a promise to deliver the magic of the sport to a community that treasures horse racing. Ensuring the success of this meet will not be a challenge – it will be a celebration.

I enthusiastically support The Big Fresno Fair’s Board of Directors, leadership team, and the many horsemen, businesses, and fans who depend on this meet and respectfully request your support in assigning the proposed dates. With your approval, The Big Fresno Fair will bring racing back to Fresno—and deliver a successful, high-quality meet that honors the past and builds toward a stronger future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Esmeralda Soria', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

ESMERALDA SORIA

Assemblywoman, 27th District

Cc: Scott Chaney, CHRB Executive Director
Big Fresno Fair Board of Directors
Big Fresno Fair CEO, Christina Estrada