

October 31, 2025

California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Letter of Support for Approval of Thoroughbred and Harness Race Dates at the Big Fresno Fairgrounds

To the Honorable Members of the California Horse Racing Board:

As the Councilmember for District Seven in the City of Fresno, I respectfully urge the California Horse Racing Board to approve race dates for thoroughbred and harness horse racing at the Big Fresno Fairgrounds.

The Big Fresno Fair is one of California's oldest and most celebrated annual traditions, serving as a cornerstone of our community and reflecting Fresno's proud agricultural heritage since its founding in 1884. Live horse racing has long been a defining feature of the Fair, bringing together families, farmers, and fans from across the nation in celebration of Fresno's deep equestrian roots. The Fresno Fairgrounds is home to one of the few remaining racetracks in Central California capable of hosting live horse racing events that meet the California Horse Racing Board's operational and safety standards.

Thoroughbred horse racing has historically drawn significant crowds to the Big Fresno Fair. In the most recent Fair, its absence was deeply felt by fans and horsemen alike. These events have been major contributors to the Fair's success and Fresno's local economy. Visitors and wagering participants traveling to Fresno generate tourism revenue that directly benefits small businesses, hotels, restaurants, and local vendors. Securing thoroughbred race dates during the Big Fresno Fair is essential to restoring that economic momentum and ensuring this long-standing tradition continues to thrive in the Central Valley.

The opportunity to add harness horse racing to Fresno's racing calendar allows for greater year-round utilization of our racetrack, complementing thoroughbred racing and enhancing Fresno's competitiveness as a premier destination for equine sport. This addition would allow horsemen to establish themselves in Fresno for longer periods of time, increasing our City's economic activity and creating more permanent jobs in hospitality, animal care, and entertainment.

By adding race dates for both thoroughbred and harness horse racing, the California Horse Racing Board would ensure that the Central Valley, the agricultural heart of California, has equitable access to the

same world-class opportunities enjoyed in larger metropolitan areas. It would additionally help promote agriculture to the next generation, garnering interest in the future farmers that will feed our nation. This addition aligns with Fresno's inclusive economic development goals and enriches what is already one of our community's defining annual traditions.

I believe this is a pivotal moment for the Big Fresno Fair and the City of Fresno. With the support of the California Horse Racing Board, we can strengthen our shared legacy, stimulate our regional economy, and preserve a proud part of California's history for generations to come.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued commitment to sustaining horse racing in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nelson Esparza', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nelson Esparza
Fresno City Councilmember, District 7

November 14, 2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: SUPPORT John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy

Dear California Horse Racing Board,

I am proud to express my support for the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which aims to bring horse racing back to Northern California in 2026 at the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, Humboldt County Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and Big Fresno Fair. Hosting races at these Northern California fairs will not only boost revenue for each Fairgrounds but also benefit their surrounding communities.

As a supporter and partner of the Tehama District Fair, I believe that their success translates to our success. This initiative is projected to create over 900 jobs and generate millions of dollars in revenue. The increased revenue for the fairgrounds and the community is essential for the sustainability of our Northern California Fairs.

As you are aware, Fairgrounds across the state serve as vital hubs for community enrichment, emergency support, and agricultural education. The funds generated from horse racing will ensure that these Fairgrounds are maintained and readily available when called upon.

It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Johnny D. Taboada

Taboada Racing Stables LLC — Owner

cc: Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fair

Sent from my iPhone

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of The John C. Harris Memorial Circuit reviving horse racing in Northern California fair racing circuit. Horse racing at California fairs have been a part of our rich history for decades it is unfair to restrict horse racing to only 2 tracks in the southern part of the state.

Please consider bringing back this exciting and family oriented sport to Northern California.

Signed

Jennifer Sperry

Owner

Sent from my iPhone

Dear California Horse Racing Board,

The John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which intends to revive horse racing in Northern California in 2026 at the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, Humboldt County Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and Big Fresno Fair, has my full support. In addition to increasing revenue for each Fairground, holding races at these Northern California fairs will help the local communities.

As a partner and supporter of the Tehama District Fair, I think that our success is correlated with theirs. It is anticipated that this program would produce millions of dollars in revenue and over 900 jobs. The viability of our Northern California Fairs depends on the increasing revenue for the fairgrounds and the community.

As you are aware, Fairgrounds are essential centers for agricultural education, emergency assistance, and community development throughout the state. These fairgrounds will be kept up to date and easily accessible when needed thanks to the money raised by horse racing.

I am requesting your permission to support the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy because of these reasons. I appreciate you giving this significant issue some thought.

With Very Best Regards,

Angel Cruz

October 31, 2025

California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

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I believe this is a pivotal moment for the Big Fresno Fair and the City of Fresno. With the support of the California Horse Racing Board, we can strengthen our shared legacy, stimulate our regional economy, and preserve a proud part of California's history for generations to come.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued commitment to sustaining horse racing in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nelson Esparza', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nelson Esparza
Fresno City Councilmember, District 7

November 14, 2025

Dear California Horse Racing Board,

I am eager to express my support for the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which aims to bring horse racing back to Northern California. I grew up attending races as a young child in the Bay Area during the 90's with my family and absolutely fell in love with the game. So much so that when driving back home from the track, I would designate upcoming road signs in the distance as the "finish line" and look for other cars ahead of us that we were catching up to and pretending we were a closing horse trying to 'nail that other car on the wire'.

Fast forward a few years and I moved to Butte County where there wasn't any racing within 150miles, apart from the harness track at CalExpo, and as a young kid, my days of going to the track on any regular basis was over. As my friends went to college and I visited one that was attending Cal Berkeley, I was reminded about the track and reignited that passion for the game. So much so that I decided to stop working full-time and earn my Bachelor's Degree in Marketing because Golden Gate Fields was hiring in their marketing department at the time and I wanted to help grow the sport overall. Fast forward a few more years and I have my degree and Golden Gate Fields is shut down.

I still love the sport but am disheartened by the seeming lack of effort to grow any sort of grass-roots approach to racing in California and reach a potential new market and create new fans. I am surprised GGF lasted as long as it did in an area where this industry is politically frowned upon. However, in the Northern section of the state, I think there is a general understanding and appreciation for livestock and rodeos, and I think horse racing in Northern California could be a success. A destination for horse racing in Northern California would not only be accepted, but would also draw in the horsemen from Oregon and Washington during their off-season as has been shown in the previous years during the Fair meets.

For many reasons, I would love to see a "farm league" of horse racing stay alive and well throughout the state, and I truly believe Northern California is a ripe market. I would love to help in any way I can and I know other people in the area that love horse racing and would love to help out. I currently have a YouTube channel "Monday Morning Handicapping" where I cover many aspects of the game and direct it toward a relatively newer audience that is less familiar with the game in hopes to give them a grasp of the concepts. If racing were to come to the area, I would love to seek employment and do all that I can to ensure its viability. I implore you to give horse racing a lifeline in the state. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Please view this opportunity with the utmost optimism as any passionate fan of the game would and should. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Brad DeMartini

November 17, 2025

California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: SUPPORT John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy

Dear California Horse Racing Board,

I am proud to express my support for the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which aims to bring horse racing back to Northern California in 2026 at the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, Humboldt County Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and Big Fresno Fair. Hosting races at these Northern California fairs will not only boost revenue for each Fairgrounds but also benefit their surrounding communities.

As a supporter and partner of the Tehama District Fair, I believe that their success translates to our success. This initiative is projected to create over 900 jobs and generate millions of dollars in revenue. The increased revenue for the fairgrounds and the community is essential for the sustainability of our Northern California Fairs.

As you are aware, Fairgrounds across the state serve as vital hubs for community enrichment, emergency support, and agricultural education. The funds generated from horse racing will ensure that these Fairgrounds are maintained and readily available when called upon.

It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Additionally, I support getting satellite betting back for the fairs to support the purses. Also, the OTB money for the north should absolutely be brought back for the north as it always has been. The southern racetracks should be made to support themselves with southern OTB money. They have no rights to the north's money and should be ashamed to say otherwise.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bumgardner Pool
Owner

cc: Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fair

November 16th, 2025

California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: SUPPORT John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy

To the Honorable Members of the California Horse Racing Board,

I am proud to express my support for the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which aims to bring horse racing back to Northern California in 2026 at the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, Humboldt County Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and Big Fresno Fair. California's agricultural history is worth preserving, and horse racing is a premier agricultural entertainment product that brings together generations of families and friends.

Growing up in Pleasanton, the history of the racetrack at the Alameda County Fairgrounds was a part of the elementary school history curriculum. We were taught of Augustin Bernal and the various families who founded our city and created this tradition. Attending the races at the fair each summer was not only a beacon of entertainment, but a cultural tie to the storied history of California, and the local community. The loss of racing this past year was felt across the city and the state.

Bernal Park Racing takes the namesake of the Augustin Bernal family, and carries with it the heritage of this sport and California agricultural history. Horse Racing is an important part of the Pleasanton identity. Additionally, what better way to honor the legacy of John C. Harris than to continue the storied racing tradition at the fairs across Northern and Southern California.

When considering this proposal from Bernal Park Racing, please remember the countless generations who have contributed to California agriculture, horsemanship, and members of each community who see racing as a beautiful, exciting way to bring the community together.

In this exponentially increasing digital age, we need more physical events to engage the community, not less. The summer fair races have always been a multi-generational attraction. Reviving Northern California Fair Racing is a tremendous

opportunity to maintain this pillar of community and entertainment, engage a new generation in the agricultural history of California, and provide an economic supplement to each community it engages, up and down the entire state of California.

Thank you for your consideration. I strongly urge the board to support this proposal, to preserve a sport we all love, and to maintain our ties to those who came before us and to memorialize the agricultural history, and present, of our great state.

Respectfully,

Austin Greth
Construction Manager
Pleasanton Native and Racing fan

cc: Stephanie Wedge, Bernal Park Racing

11/16/2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: SUPPORT John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy

Dear California Horse Racing Board,

As a previous member of the great horse racing community please take this under advisement with my full support. Horse racing in CA needs all the support it can get. DO THE RIGHT THING.

Marty LaDuke. Previously Ralph Garcia's first and only wife.

I am proud to express my support for the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which aims to bring horse racing back to Northern California in 2026 at the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, Humboldt County Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and Big Fresno Fair. Hosting races at these Northern California fairs will not only boost revenue for each Fairgrounds but also benefit their surrounding communities.

As a supporter and partner of the Tehama District Fair, I believe that their success translates to our success. This initiative is projected to create over 900 jobs and generate millions of dollars in revenue. The increased revenue for the fairgrounds and the community is essential for the sustainability of our Northern California Fairs.

As you are aware, Fairgrounds across the state serve as vital hubs for community enrichment, emergency support, and agricultural education. The funds generated from horse racing will ensure that these Fairgrounds are maintained and readily available when called upon.

It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Marty LaDuke-Garcia

cc: Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fair

11/17/2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

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As a supporter of the Sonoma County Fair, I believe that their success translates to our success. This initiative is projected to create over 900 jobs and generate millions of dollars in revenue. The increased revenue for the fairgrounds and the community is essential for the sustainability of our Northern California Fairs.

As you are aware, Fairgrounds across the state serve as vital hubs for community enrichment, emergency support, and agricultural education. The funds generated from horse racing will ensure that these Fairgrounds are maintained and readily available when called upon.

It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Hicks

Owner – Santa Rosa

11/17/2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

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It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Hicks

Owner – Santa Rosa

Dear CHRB,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider your ruling to stop all Northern California racing. I live close to Ferndale where we have had racing at our fair for as long as I can remember. (I am 77 years old). The Bay Area which used to have racing at Bay Meadows, Tanforan, and Golden Gate Fields is now without any racing. The Sacramento and Pleasanton tracks are no longer in use either. The big Sonoma County fair is without racing as well. It really is a disgrace to limit California racing to southern California only. You are depriving Northern California in an effort to garner all the tax dollars in SoCal. You are hurting our economy by not allowing racing in NorCal.

Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

Carole Jepsen

Long time tax payer and concerned citizen.

Sent from my iPad

November 17, 2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

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Sincerely,

Catherine Bumgardner Pool

Owner

cc: Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fair

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of The John C. Harris Memorial Circuit reviving horse racing for the Northern California fair racing circuit.

Horse racing at the Northern California fairs will boost revenue for each Fairground and also be of economical benefit to their surrounding communities.

California Fairs have a rich history of horse racing. Restricting horse racing to only 2 tracks in the southern part of California is unfair.

Bring back this exciting sport to Northern California.

Support horse racing for the entire state of California.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sandberg

Horse Owner and Supporter of Horse Racing

To Whom It May Concern:

The John C. Harris Memorial Circuit for reviving horse racing for the Northern California fair racing circuit has my full support!

Horse racing should be supported for the entire State of California. Restricting horse racing to only 2 tracks in Southern California is discrimination.

California Fairs have a rich history of horse racing and should be continued in Northern California.

Bring back this exciting sport to Northern California.

Support horse racing for the entire State of California.

Sincerely,

Sandi Gaspar

Horse Owner and Supporter of Fair Racing in Northern California

11/18/25

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: SUPPORT John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy

Dear California Horse Racing Board,

My name is Sarah Jennings and I am a California Horse Racing Owner & Breeder. I have been in the horse racing industry for most of my life and have been torn abruptly apart when I no longer received the option to have my horses close to my home and farm. I wholeheartedly support not only the idea, but the NEED for Northern California Horse Racing. And for that reason, I am proud to express my support for the John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy, which aims to bring horse racing back to Northern California in 2026 at the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, Humboldt County Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and Big Fresno Fair. Hosting races at these Northern California fairs will not only boost revenue for each Fairgrounds but also benefit their surrounding communities.

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It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sarah Jennings

California Horse Racing Owner & Breeder

November 18 2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

RE: SUPPORT John C. Harris County Fair Racing Legacy

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It is for these reasons that I support the John C Harris County Fair Racing Legacy and request your approval. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Christine Hubbs

Pari-Mutuel Clerk #189

cc: Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fair

Sent from my iPhone

Good Afternoon Catherine,

Thank you for including me on your letter to the CHRB in regards to support for Ferndale to request dates. We are planning to be on the agenda in January. If you have any questions for Bernal Park Racing Management Co. please reach out to me.

Thanks,

Stephanie Wedge

These comments apply to November 2025 meeting as well.

----- Original Message -----

From: CATHERINE POOL [REDACTED]

To: "information@chrb.ca.gov" <information@chrb.ca.gov>

Date: 05/09/2025 10:49 AM PDT

Subject: Public comment for 5/15/25 meeting

I am submitting this comment letter to support the Ferndale request for racing dates and northern CA horseracing in general. Please approve the Humbolt County fair racing dates!

Hello Catherine,

Thank you for the beautiful letter about your support for horse racing in Tehama. As stated in my previous email, we are planning to be on the agenda in January.

Thanks,

Stephanie

On Mon, Nov 17, 2025 at 4:15 PM CATHERINE POOL [REDACTED] wrote:
PLEASE FIND MY LETTER OF SUPPORT ATTACHED.

cathe pool

We need to bring back racing to Northern California, I have been born and raised into horse racing. We went from year round racing between summer fairs (Stockton, Pleasanton, Vallejo, Santa Rosa, Ferndale, Sacramento, Pomona, and Fresno) bay meadows, and Golden gate to having to pack up our lives and some of us our families to travel to emerald downs to turf paradise, to continue doing what we love and share with our families and our families legacies as well as memories of those lost, to continue to fight another day for our horses and provide for our loved ones. Some of us between racing at emerald downs and turf Paradise don't get to go home and see the rest of our families and wake up in our own beds because to continue to fight for racing we are torn away from our families, leaving not only our loved ones behind but our homes we all worked so hard for and need to continue to pay for. I would love to support these racing dates as well as work as hard as I can to try and make this happen.

Thank you,

Marsha Greiner – Rogers

12/18/2025

California Horse Racing Board

1010 Hurley Way Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

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Sincerely,

Christine Hubbs,

Pari-Mutuel Clerk (since1987)

Willing to work managerial or any positions, to make this dream a reality

Resident (home owner) of Red Bluff since 1999

cc: Mandy Staley, Tehama District Fair

Sent from my iPhone



The National HBPA, Inc.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

www.hbpa.org

3380 Paris Pike • Lexington, KY 40511
(859) 259-0451 – Telephone (859) 259-0452 – Facsimile
Email: racing@hbpa.org

President & Chairman
Dr. Doug Daniels – VA

Chief Executive Officer
Eric J. Hamelback

Regional Vice Presidents
J. Lloyd Yother – AZ
Joe Davis – IN
Rick Hiles – KY
Naomi Long – WV

Secretary/Treasurer
Lynne Schuller – NE

General Counsel
Peter Ecabert

Veterinary Advisor
Dr. Thomas Tobin

January 9, 2026

Mr. Scott Chaney
Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Chaney,

On behalf of the National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (HBPA) I am writing to express our strong support for continued live thoroughbred racing in Northern California. As a horsemen's organization representing nearly 30,000 owners and trainers across the United States and Canada, we recognize the importance of racing in Northern California as a vital component of the overall health of thoroughbred racing in the Pacific Northwest.

Our organization has been approached by a group of Northern California owners and trainers to further assist them in their efforts to return live racing to Northern California in 2026. The loss of live racing in 2025 resulted in the relocation of hundreds of horses previously racing in Northern California to Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Colorado and Arizona. Not all horses bred and/or previously raced in Northern California are suited for the more limited racing opportunities in Southern California. California owners and breeders participating on the broader circuit in the Pacific Northwest require certainty that live racing in Northern California will continue in the future to remain engaged in the industry. The industry in California is at a critical crossroads, and the loss of these owners and breeders will be at the detriment of racing as a whole – both in Southern California and more generally throughout the West.

Our organization supports efforts by Northern California owners and trainers to seek a partnership between the national HBPA and the establishment of a future California affiliate. We recognize under current state law that a California HBPA will not serve as the formal entity negotiating purses or other statutory duties, however we can be a strong and formal advocate for owners in Northern California. The national HBPA and our surrounding affiliates offer a suite of a services to our members that can assist the track operator in performing necessary regulatory, HISA and other backside related functions that are key to operating a successful race meet. We expect conversations with Northern California horsemen to continue in the immediate future to explore the formal adoption of a California affiliate in line with the parameters of the national HBPA in order to offer these services where appropriate.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Northern California owners, trainers, the CHRB and other partner organizations to execute a successful live racing program for Northern California in 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric J. Hamelback
CEO
National Horseman's Benevolent and Protective Association (NHBPA)

Email: ehamelback@hbpa.org

CC: CHRB Chairman Dr. Gregory Ferraro
CHRB Vice Chairman Oscar Gonzales
CHRB Commissioners



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

January 13, 2026

Mr. George Schmitt
Bernal Park Racing
Sent via E-mail: clareomni@aol.com

Dear Mr. Schmitt:

Thank you for your interest in supporting California's horse racing industry and for submitting your proposal to form an entity under Food and Agriculture Code §4058. The Department appreciates the effort and commitment reflected in your request.

After a thorough review, we have determined that the current statutory framework does not provide authority for CDFA to approve the proposed structure. Food and Agriculture Code §4058 envisions entities formed by fairs or similar public organizations, and existing provisions do not contemplate private entities leasing racetrack facilities for the purpose of conducting live horse racing meetings. Additionally, related statutes impose restrictions that would prevent implementation of the proposal as submitted.

Thank you again for your interest and commitment to the industry.

Yours truly,

Karen Ross
Secretary

cc: Haig Baghdassarian, Chief Counsel, CDFA
Michael Flores, Deputy Secretary, Fairs and Expositions
Scott Cheney, Executive Director, CHRB



January 13, 2026

Members

California Horse Racing Board
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825

Honorable Members,

On behalf of the Tehama District Fair, Alameda County Fair, and the Humboldt County Fair, we respectfully request the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB), review the following request in accordance with Agenda Item #6 on the January 14, 2026 CHRB Agenda.

Pursuant to a letter received today, January 13, 2026, not committing the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) support for a combined fair race meet specifically authorized under California Food & Agriculture Code 4058, we have made the determination to individually seek an allocation of race dates under Business and Professions Code 19549. Under B&P Section 19549, the California Horse Racing Board has the sole authority to license racing fairs for up to four weeks a year for live thoroughbred/mixed breed racing without seeking consent by CDFA to operate a combined fair race meet. The dates requested by Tulelake-Butte Valley Fair and Intermountain Fair and Event center will therefore be withdrawn.

Although we are requesting the CHRB make the date allocation for Northern California as a single package, please note each fair will be seeking an individual license to run during the dates they have been allocated. Bernal Park Racing Management Company, LLC will assist each licensee in operating their race meet.

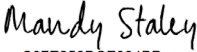
CHRB Members
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Our modified request for dates now reflects the following schedule:

Tehama District Fair, Red Bluff- April 29 – May 26, 2026 4 weeks, 9 Racing Days
Alameda County Fair, Pleasanton- June 17- July 14, 2026 4 weeks, 12 Racing Days
Humboldt County Fair, Ferndale- August 5- September 1, 2026 4 weeks, 12 Racing Days


We respectfully request your consideration of our modified request.

Best Regards,

DocuSigned by:

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Mandy Staley
Tehama District Fair

Signed by:

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Moira Kenny
Humboldt County Fair

DocuSigned by:

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Jerome Hoban
Alameda County Fair

cc: Mr. Scott Chaney
Mr. George Schmitt
Mr. David Elliott

**Response of Bernal Park Racing Management Company (BPRMC)
to Staff Analysis Submitted January 8, 2026**

BPRMC hereby submits its response to the referenced staff analysis. This matter is scheduled for discussion and action by the Board on January 14, 2026.

Background

In June of 2025, BPRMC sought racing dates for racing fairs in Northern California. The Board rejected the requested racing dates. Some Board members expressed concern that it was too soon for Northern Racing given the hoped-for results in Southern California racing.

The current staff analysis does not discuss these concerns. The staff analysis now raises a number of legal issues – all without merit as discussed below.

**Application of the Statutory Bar Is Inapplicable
As in the Staff Analysis**

The staff analysis discusses Business and Professional Code section 19549.16(a) (prohibiting racing date allocation to non-fair associations unless such associations were licensed before 2010), to conclude that “...the law appears to prohibit its (BPRMC) operation as a private racing association conducting live racing at fairs.” The analysis is incorrect.

BPRMC’s business proposal to assist the county fairs and to support economically challenged rural communities is accomplished through the county fairs operating as licensees. BPRMC stands in a support role in financial and operational assistance. Under these circumstances, the staff observation that BPRMC has never been licensed to conduct a race meeting is off the mark. BPRMC is not seeking racing date allocations on its own behalf, but rather on behalf of the counties.

The Board’s clear public interest charge in the allocation of racing dates¹ further supports the allocation requested here. The employment, economic development, racing competition and other benefits to be derived from BPRMC’s plan as a facilitator, completely charitable in nature, should be beyond debate. Noteworthy in the staff’s analysis is the reference to BP Code Sec. 19549.16 (a), which staff presents as a restriction on the licensing of racing associations that are not licensed to conduct race meetings prior to 2010. The legislative history of this section belies

¹ See Business & Professional Code §§19440(a)(b) and 19530; CHR B Rule 1430.that

the staff analysis. The attached legislative history of this section discloses that it was intended to allow an entity known as Oaktree Racing to enter into a public/private partnership with Alameda County. See analysis, page 2. The referenced statutory section is a permissive addition to the horse law provisions, and not an entry bar, as the staff analysis contends.

In sum, BPRMC respectfully submits that it is entirely qualified to conduct live horse racing with the county fairs with whom it proposes to do so, and as a non-licensee. Any other result would run contrary to both the facts and the relevant statute.

The staff analysis contending that BPRMC is outside of statutory authority of section 4058 of the Food and Agriculture Code, and that CHRB date allocation is barred by the lack of action by the CDFA, merits special discussion. It should be noted that, as of this date, the CDFA has denied BPRMC's request.

Under Business & Professions Code §19440, the CHRB has "all powers necessary and proper" to regulate horse racing, including the authority to allocate race dates. This authority is reinforced by CHRB Rule 1430, which states that allocating dates does not commit the Board to issuing a license. The rule exists specifically so that dates can be assigned before all operational elements—such as contracts, inspections, or third-party approvals—are finalized. Nothing in the Horse Racing Law requires CDFA approval before CHRB allocates dates. Date allocation is a preliminary action that belongs solely to CHRB, and, in any event, BPRMC disagrees with the summary explanation of CDFA's letter.

On the other hand, CDFA's authority comes from the Food & Agricultural Code, which governs fairground property and the powers of District Agricultural Associations (DAAs). Under Food & Agricultural Code §4051, DAAs may enter into contracts necessary for the management of their affairs, including agreements with private operators like Bernal Park. The Staff

Analysis relies on Food & Agricultural Code §4058, but that section simply states that fairs **may form a joint entity for a combined fair meet with CDFA approval**. The statute does not require fairs to form such an entity, nor does it prohibit fairs from using a **standard contract under §4051**. CDFA approval is **only** required if the **fairs choose to form a joint entity under §4058**, not when they use normal contracting authority. **Absent CDFA approval**, for a joint combined meet, the fairs plans to operate individually, together with a series of dates allowed by the law.

Regarding Bernal Park specifically, the Staff's interpretation of Business & Professions Code §19549.16 is misplaced. That section limits which private racing associations may receive dates directly, **but here the fairs—not Bernal Park—are the applicants. Bernal Park is not seeking dates in its own name**. Instead, it is **acting as an operator contracted by the fairs, which is fully permitted under §4051**. The statute restricts who may receive dates directly from the Board, not who may be hired by a fair to operate its meet. Bernal Park's role is operational, not statutory, and the law allows fairs to contract with a private operator for management, logistics, and racing operations. Nothing in §19549.16 prohibits this structure.

The Staff also raises concerns about the Bernal Park Racing Foundation under Business & Professions Code §19482, **restricting license issuance to non-profit corporations but this provision does not apply**. BPRMC is not a nonprofit, and the Foundation does not receive racing revenues. Its role is limited to infrastructure support and capital improvements, which are not prohibited by the statute. There is no revenue-sharing arrangement with the Foundation that would trigger §19482.

In sum, the statutes governing race-date assignments do not require CDFA approval, the application meets all legal requirements, and the Board cannot create new conditions that the law does not contain.

Bernal Park Racing Management Company's Description of Non-Profit Operations

As earlier discussed, the Staff Analysis recounts the requirement of the Business and Professional Code section 19482, which prohibits the licensing of a non-profit corporation entitled to an exemption from any tax imposed by the State of California in the conduct of a race meeting. The Staff Analysis additionally cites to Business and Professional Code section 19482(b) which alternatively denies licensing “under any arrangement” where a non-profit corporation is to share in the receipts of the license related to the conduct of such meeting.

The Staff Analysis concludes that the Board needs to understand “with certainty” BPRMC’s business organization before issuance of a license.

As a threshold matter, BPRMC agrees with the staff’s statutory description, although as explained here, the proscribed activity under the rule[s] is not present. Thus, there is no bar to the issuance of a license for the county fairs.

The Bernal Park Racing Foundation is a non-profit foundation organized under section 501(c) of the Federal Revenue Code. It neither owns or participates in any racing operations. Instead, the Foundation serves to underwrite the operations of BPRMC – an LLC. One of the support functions performed by BPRMC, LLC is to financially stabilize county fair racing in the North, as previously noted on several occasions. Thus, any county fair operating losses are absorbed by BPRMC. Any excess revenues are transferred to the county fairs. This arrangement is completely lawful under the rules of the Internal Revenue Service and those of this Board. Neither BPRMC nor the Bernal Park Racing Foundation, profit from, nor share revenues in any way, in this support arrangement for the county fairs; this arrangement is decidedly consistent with Business and Professional Code section 19482.



Updated Dates for Tehama, Alameda & Humboldt Counties

Red Bluff/Tehama

Barn Area Opens - 4/22/26

1st Host Day - 4/29/26

1st Race Day - 5/1/26

Last Race Day - 5/25/26

Last Host Day - 5/26/26

Tehama Barn Area Closes - 6/10/26

Pleasanton/Alameda

Barn Area Opens - 6/9/26

1st Host Day - 6/17/26

1st Race Day - 6/19/26

Last Race Day - 7/12/26

Last Host Day - 7/14/16

Pleasanton Barn Area Closes - 7/19/26

Ferndale/Humboldt

Barn Area Opens - 7/17/26

1st Host Day - 8/5/26

1st Race Day - 8/7/26

Last Race Day - 8/30/26

Last Host Day - 9/1/26