

CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (COPAC)

Regulation, Communication, Education



The California Organic Products Advisory Committee (COPAC) oversees the State Organic Program and advises the Secretary of Food and Agriculture on organic issues. Since passage of the California Organic Food and Farming Act in 2016, COPAC now has expanded responsibilities to support organic agriculture through education, outreach, and other activities as well.

Being a COPAC member is a great way to serve the organic community and keep up to date on organic issues in the state. Serving on COPAC also provides individuals with valuable leadership experience.

COPAC COMPOSITION

COPAC has 15 primary members plus an alternate for each appointment.

6 producers

2 processors

1 wholesale distributor

1 accredited certifier

1 consumer representative

1 environmental representative

2 technical representatives with scientific credentials related to agricultural chemicals, toxicology, or food science

1 retail representative

RESPONSIBILITIES AND TERMS

Members should plan to attend each of the three COPAC meetings held annually. Meeting dates are generally each January, May, and September.

Appointments are for three years from the date of appointment. A member may serve for two consecutive terms. COPAC members are reimbursed for expenses related to their participation (such as travel to and from meetings).

ROLE OF ALTERNATES

Most of the open seats on COPAC currently are alternate positions. While these are not voting seats unless the primary member is absent, alternates have a unique opportunity to attend COPAC meetings, ask questions, and ultimately be appointed as a primary member when the seat becomes open.

REQUIREMENTS

Except for the consumer, environmental, and technical representatives, the members of the advisory committee and their alternates must have derived a substantial part of their income from their services in production, handling, processing, or retailing organic products for at least three years prior to appointment.

The consumer and environmental representatives and their alternates shall not have a financial interest in the direct sales or marketing of the organic product industry and shall be members or employees of representatives of recognized nonprofit organizations whose principal purpose is the protection of consumer health or protection of the environment.

The technical representatives and their alternates shall not have a financial interest in the production, handling, processing, or marketing of the organic products industry. The technical representatives may be involved in organic research or technical review providing they have no financial benefit from results of the research project or technical review.