



January 6, 2023

Mary Jane Coombs
 Branch Chief, Industrial Strategies Division
 California Air Resources Board
 1001 I Street, P.O. Box 2828
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Request to Deny Petition to
 Regulate Sulfuryl Fluoride

Dear Ms. Coombs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in response to a petition by the Center for Biological Diversity and Californians for Pesticide Reform on October 27, 2022 to the Air Resources Board to initiate a rulemaking action on sulfur dioxide (SO₂). This coalition, consisting of a wide variety of industries and businesses in the agricultural sector, write to request denial of such petition, which includes the request to add SO₂ to the state's greenhouse gas emission inventory and phase out use in California.

California's economic prowess as a global food producer is without question. Fresh and processed California-grown commodities are coveted worldwide because of their superior quality. Maintaining that level of quality is highly dependent upon compliance with food safety and pest management standards enforced through federal and international export requirements, for which SO₂ is necessary. In short, SO₂ is the primary product used for fumigation of export-bound commodities because it guarantees complete elimination of pest infestations that can transmit serious and sometimes life-threatening food borne diseases such as E. coli, Salmonella, and Listeria. In alignment with sustainable pest management, SO₂ use rebuts pest resistance, is highly efficacious, and allows for shorter treatment timeframes that expedite processing and shipment of time-sensitive exports.¹ The petitioners' statements about SO₂ alternatives are neither practical nor consistent with food safety and trade protocols carefully negotiated by federal and international partners. Without access to SO₂, for which there is no alternative, California would be precluded from exporting some of its highest-value commodities, including dried fruits and nuts, and threaten the ability of the agricultural community to respond to food safety related pest outbreaks, resulting in billions of annual revenues and associated jobs lost.

It is critical to understand that its use as a fumigant is not without significant federal and state oversight. As a restricted use product, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Pesticide Regulation have evaluated SO₂ for safety. In response, the state restricts applications to only licensed, trained professionals, impose strict mitigation standards to protect applicators, bystanders, and sensitive populations, and routinely conducts human and environmental monitoring. As result, SO₂ is used judiciously along with other pest management methods as part of comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs designed to protect stored foods in a manner that minimizes unintended public health and environmental risks, as well as food commodity loss.

Finally, as members of frontline communities impacted by climate change and embracing both nature-based and engineered carbon solutions, we support the state's actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, any subsequent action to limit SO₂ fumigation will result in a negligible impact on climate change and in exchange, would have significant impacts on public health, the environment, and the economy. Most importantly, this action would distract from the State's current important and impactful climate work. As evidenced by the recently adopted 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality, we have more effective ways to regulate greenhouse gases in a way that meaningfully impacts climate change.

¹ See CARB, *Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy* (Mar. 2017), Appendix D: Research Related to Mitigation Measures, p. 7, available at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/SLCP_Appendix_D.pdf.

Therefore, we respectfully request that Air Resources Board reject this petition and appreciate your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



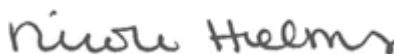
Will Scott, Jr., President
African American Farmers of California



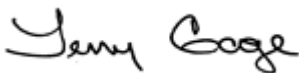
Tricia Geringer, Vice President of Government
Affairs
Agricultural Council of California



Richard Matoian, President
American Pistachio Growers



Nicole Helms, Executive Director
California Alfalfa and Forage Association



Terry Gage, President
California Agricultural Aircraft Association



Ruthann Anderson, President/CEO
California Association of Pest Control Advisers



Todd Sanders, Executive Director
California Apple Commission
California Blueberry Association
California Blueberry Commission
Olive Growers Council of California



Michael Müller, Director of Government Relations
California Association of Winegrape Growers



Casey Creamer, President
California Citrus Mutual



Christopher Reardon, Director of Legislative
Affairs
California Farm Bureau Federation



Ian LeMay, President
California Fresh Fruit Association



Roger Isom, President/CEO
California Cotton Ginners and Growers
Association
Western Agricultural Processors Association



Rick Tomlinson, President
California Strawberry Commission

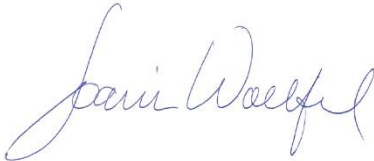


Mike Montna, President/CEO
California Tomato Growers Association



Robert Verloop, Executive Director/CEO
California Walnut Commission

Sharron Zoller, State President
California Women of Agriculture



Joani Woelfel, President & CEO
Far West Equipment Dealers Association



Manuel Cunha, Jr., President
Nisei Farmers League



Chris Zanobini, President
Plant California Alliance



Renee Pinel, President/CEO
Western Plant Health Association