



March 3, 2026

**Notice of Public Hearing**  
**To Consider the Continuation of the**  
**California Date Commission**  
**Hearing Date: Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.**

**TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (Department) is calling a public hearing to receive testimony and evidence from the California date industry and the general public regarding whether the operation of the California Date Commission (Commission) should be continued. The Department is required to conduct such a hearing every six years, pursuant to Section 77881 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, to determine if the Commission is fulfilling its declared purposes. The last public hearing regarding the continuation of the Commission was conducted in 2020.

This hearing will be conducted in a hybrid format, with both in-person and remote options for attendees to participate. The hearing is scheduled for the date and time indicated below. Please use the physical address provided below to join the hearing in-person. Please use the link provided below to join the hearing via Zoom or the telephone number provided below to join the hearing by teleconference. Please see the instructions enclosed with this notice as Exhibit "A" for additional information regarding participating in the hearing remotely.

Date and Time	Location
Thursday April 2, 2026 Beginning at 9:00 a.m.	California Date Commission 39-205 Leopard Street, Suite 222 Palm Desert, CA 92211
	<b>Videoconference/Teleconference</b>
	<b>Join by Zoom:</b> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81549893858">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81549893858</a> <b>Meeting ID:</b> 815 4989 3858 <b>Passcode:</b> xr&&7eyJ  <b>Join by Telephone:</b> 1-669-900-6833 <b>Meeting ID:</b> 815 4989 3858 <b>Passcode:</b> 15603207

**OVERVIEW OF THE CALIFORNIA DATE COMMISSION**

The California Date Commission is a State agricultural marketing program that conducts marketing and promotion, education, and production and nutrition research activities on behalf



of California's date industry. These activities are funded by mandatory assessments levied upon all California date handlers who handle at least 25,000 pounds of dates annually. The Commission is directed by a Board of Directors composed of six handlers from Riverside County who are elected by the date industry.

### HEARING PROCEDURE AND HEARING PARTICIPATION

All affected California date handlers and other interested persons are invited to participate in this hearing. During the hearing, a panel from the Department will receive testimony and evidence, both oral and documentary, with respect to relevant matters, including the following:

1. The production, economic, and marketing conditions affecting the California date industry and the effect that the Commission has upon such conditions,
2. Whether the Commission tends to effectuate the declared purposes and attain the declared objectives for which it was established, and
3. Whether the Commission furthers the interests of the residents of California.

Testimony may be provided verbally during the hearing on April 2, 2026 or may be submitted in writing. All written comments must be received by the Department's Marketing Branch by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2026 and may be submitted using one of the options listed below.

<b>Ways to Submit Written Testimony</b>	
<b>By Mail to:</b>	California Department of Food and Agriculture Marketing Branch Attn: David Hillis 1220 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814-5603
<b>By E-mail to:</b>	<a href="mailto:david.hillis@cdfa.ca.gov">david.hillis@cdfa.ca.gov</a>

### PREPARATION OF HEARING TESTIMONY

Those who support the continuation of the California Date Commission should provide testimony that communicates why they believe the Commission should be continued and explain how the activities of the Commission aid the California date industry and the general public. Conversely, those who oppose the continuation of the Commission should provide testimony that communicates why they believe the Commission should not be continued and explain how the activities of the Commission do not aid the California date industry and the general public.

Following are examples of questions that hearing witnesses may wish to consider in preparing their testimony. In answering these questions, witnesses should explain the rationale supporting their opinions and provide relevant examples substantiating their views.

- Has the California date industry benefited from the activities conducted by the Commission? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not.
- What are the most significant accomplishments or deficiencies of the Commission over the last six years?
- What problems, if any, would the industry face in the absence of a mandatory industry-funded program?
- Has the assessment to fund the Commission proven to be a positive investment for California date handlers? Have assessments been spent wisely, efficiently, and according to the authority granted to the Commission?
- Does the general public benefit from the activities of the Commission? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not.
- If continued, are there ways that the Commission could be improved to better serve the California date industry and the general public? Please explain.

#### **STEPS SUBSEQUENT TO THE HEARING**

The hearing transcript, written comments, and submitted exhibits will be combined to form the official hearing record, which will be considered by the Department in determining whether the operation of the Commission should be continued. If the hearing record supports the continuation of the Commission and demonstrates that the Commission is fulfilling its declared purposes, the Department may authorize the Commission to operate for another six years without the need for an industry referendum. However, if the Department finds from the hearing record that a substantial question exists regarding whether the operation of the Commission should be continued, the Department will conduct a vote among affected date handlers to determine if the Commission should be continued.

If you have any questions regarding this hearing, please contact David Hillis with the Department's Marketing Branch at (916) 204-3649. For questions regarding the activities of the California Date Commission, please contact Kristy Kneiding, Manager of the Commission, at (760) 347-4510.

Sincerely,



Joe Monson, Branch Chief  
Marketing Branch

**Instructions for Participating in the Public Hearing  
Via Videoconference and Teleconference  
Hearing Date: April 2, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.**

The hearing to consider the continuation of the California Date Commission will be conducted in a hybrid format, with both in-person and remote options for attendees to participate.

The instructions below provide additional information on how to join the hearing remotely, how to provide testimony and evidence for the hearing, and the process used during the hearing. To access an electronic copy of the hearing notice and these instructions with embedded hyperlinks, please visit our website [www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt) and click on "Marketing Branch Hearings".

**How to Join the Hearing Remotely**

You can join the hearing remotely from a computer, mobile device, or telephone.

1. **To join the hearing via videoconference (with audio and video):**
  - a. Enter or click on the following link to open the Zoom videoconferencing application in your web browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81549893858>
  - b. When prompted, enter the **Meeting ID: 815 4989 3858**
  - c. When prompted, enter the **Passcode: xr&&7eyJ**
  - d. When prompted, provide your name and email address to be placed in the meeting. You will automatically be muted when joining as an attendee.
  - e. We recommend that you test out your device, internet connection, and Zoom app compatibility well before attempting to join the meeting. To learn more about Joining a Zoom Meeting, please visit the following webpage:  
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting>
2. **To join the hearing via teleconference (phone) only:**
  - a. Dial 1-669-900-6833
  - b. When prompted, enter the **Meeting ID: 815 4989 3858**
  - c. When prompted, enter the **Passcode: 15603207**
  - d. Your line will automatically be muted when joining as an attendee.

**How to Provide Testimony and Evidence for this Hearing**

Testimony for this hearing may be provided using any of the three options as outlined below:

1. **Mail testimony prior to the hearing.** *(Must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2026.)*

Mail to: California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Marketing Branch  
Attn: David Hillis  
1220 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5603

2. **Email testimony prior to the hearing.** *(Must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2026.)*  
Email to: [david.hillis@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:david.hillis@cdfa.ca.gov)

3. **Provide verbal testimony during the hearing.**

You may attend the hearing on April 2, 2026 at the physical location listed on the first page of this notice or join the hearing remotely using the videoconference or teleconference options described above. If you provide verbal testimony during the hearing and would like to submit an exhibit to support your testimony, you may do so by e-mailing the document to the Hearing Officer (Mike Francesconi at: [mike.francesconi@cdfa.ca.gov](mailto:mike.francesconi@cdfa.ca.gov)) following your testimony. Witnesses providing verbal testimony may be questioned by members of the hearing panel.

### **Process to be Used During the Hearing**

1. At the beginning of the hearing, the Hearing Officer will determine the order for calling on participants. Participants will be giving their testimony in-person or via video or telephone depending on how they've chosen to participate. Participants will be sworn in by the Hearing Officer and will be asked to identify themselves by name and affiliation.
2. If you plan to participate remotely, you will need to "raise your hand" during the Zoom meeting. If you are calling into the meeting from a telephone, you can use "Star (\*) 9" to raise/lower your hand.
3. If you plan to participate remotely, once your hand is raised and it is your turn to speak, the Hearing Officer or the meeting facilitator will unmute you and announce your name. You will then be able to provide verbal testimony for this hearing. Depending on how you are participating in this hearing, you may also need to unmute yourself.
4. A participant's time allotment in providing hearing testimony is at the discretion of the Hearing Officer and is dependent on the total number of participants – typically, each witness is allotted 20 minutes to provide verbal testimony. If the testimony you are providing verbally is in written form, it is recommended, though not required, that you submit your testimony in writing before the start of the hearing so it can be distributed to the hearing panel members. After your testimony, and following any questions from the hearing panel members, the Hearing Officer will place you back on "mute" if you are participating remotely.