

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

AB 482 (Solache)
Version: May 13, 2025
Hearing Date: July 15, 2025
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
AM

SUBJECT

California Table Grape Commission

DIGEST

This bill revises and recasts the statutes establishing and governing the California Table Grape Commission (CTGC).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CTGC was established by statute in 1967 to maintain and expand markets for fresh California grapes and to create new and larger intrastate, interstate, and foreign markets. This bill seeks to revise and update the statutes governing the CTGC to, among other things: change the membership of the CTGC; require the CTGC to compile and maintain a list of eligible producers who are qualified to vote in an election and certify the list to the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture at least 30 days before the date set for any meeting to nominate commissioners to office; authorizes the CTGC to accept and match outside contributions; and expands the cap on the marketing assessment not to exceed \$0.02 per pound. The bill also clarifies how a person files a grievance with the CTGC, requires the CTGC to initiate action within two years of discovery on any grievance filed with the Commission, and specifies that venue for such an action can be established at the domicile or place of business of the defendant or in the county of the principal office of the CTGC. The bill specifies that the CTGC can only be sued in the county of its principal office. The bill is sponsored by the California Table Grape Commission. No timely opposition was received by the Committee. The bill passed the Senate Agriculture Committee on a vote of 5 to 0.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the CTGC to promote and expand markets for fresh California table grapes. CTGC is funded by growers through a grower referendum, which must be reaffirmed every five years. (Food & Ag. Code §§ 65500 et seq.)
- 2) Levies an annual assessment on all fresh grapes during each marketing assessment, not to exceed \$0.006522 per pound. (Food & Ag. Code § 65550.)
- 3) Establishes an appeals process to filing a grievance, and provides that a decision by the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is subject to judicial review upon petition of the CTGC or the aggrieved party. (Food & Ag. Code § 65650.5.)
- 4) Requires members of the CTGC to be natural persons, over the age of 25 years, and each of whom, as an individual, a partner or employee of a producer or producers, is and has been actively engaged in growing fresh grapes within this state for a period of at least five years, as provided. (Food & Ag. Code § 65553.)

This bill:

- 1) Revises and recasts the statutes governing the CTGC, and make technical and conforming changes.
- 2) Specifies the CTGC is comprised of three producers from each district appointed by the Secretary of CDFA plus one public member appointed by the Secretary from nominees recommended by the CTGC. (Food & Ag. Code § 65575.1.)
- 3) Requires the CTGC to annually compile and maintain a list of eligible producers and certify the list to the Secretary of CDFA at least 30 days before the date set for a meeting to nominate commissioners to office.
- 4) Authorizes the CTGC to accept and match contributions of private, local, state, or federal funds and make contributions of commission funds to other persons or local, state, or federal agencies for purposes of promoting, enhancing, and maintaining the California fresh grape industry.
- 5) Increases the cap on the assessment not to exceed \$0.02 per pound.
- 6) Authorizes a person aggrieved by an action of the CTGC to file a grievance with the CTGC or a duly authorized committee designated for that purpose.

- a) An appeal of a decision of the CTGC can be made to the Secretary of CDFA.
- 7) Requires any action by the CTGC for a violation to be commenced within two years from the date of discovery of the alleged violation. Requires any action against the CTGC by a person to be commenced within two years from the date of the act of which the person complains.
- 8) Specifies that venue for such an action under 6), above, can be established at the domicile or place of business of the defendant or in the county of the principal office of the CTGC. Provides that the CTGC can only be sued in the county of its principal office.

COMMENTS

1. Stated need for the bill

The author writes:

The commission was created by statute in 1967 and has only been amended once since then, in 1982. The purpose of AB 482 is to update and modernize existing law, to be more consistent with current practices. In addition, the bill will increase the maximum assessment collected by the commission.

The commission plays a prominent role in helping the California table grape industry market grapes around the world. The industry is mostly located in and around disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin and Coachella valleys. A strong table grape industry allows for jobs and economic development in these areas.

2. Background

The Senate Agriculture Committee analysis of this bill provides useful background on the Commission writing:

CTGC was established in 1967. Approved by a grower referendum in 1968, the commission has been affirmed through grower referenda every five years since its inception. The purpose of the commission is to maintain and expand markets for fresh California grapes and to create new and larger intrastate, interstate, and foreign markets.¹ In 2023, the California total grape crop was valued at \$2.3 billion, making table grapes one of the most valued crops in the state and represents 99% of domestically-grown table grapes. In 2024, the CTGC began a global marketing

¹ Cal. Table Grape Comm., available at <https://www.producemarketguide.com/company/400059/california-table-grape-commission>.

campaign designed to drive consumer demand in the United States and target markets around the world.²

CTGC is primarily funded by assessments collected from table grape producers. The assessments are levied on all fresh grapes shipped and are collected by the shipper. The monies fund various marketing, research, and promotion programs. CTGC has only increased the marketing season assessment one time in 1983 (Chap. 535, Section 1, Statutes of 1983). Currently, the assessment can be no more than \$0.006522 per pound (about 6.5 cents per 100 pounds), computed on net weight when shipped. This bill does not change the current exemption for any shipments of 150 pounds or less from this assessment. The cost to ship has risen since 1983 so the bill is asking for an increase to \$0.02 per pound (about \$2.00 per 100 pounds).

The commission members are chosen through a process involving election by producers and appointment by the secretary of CDFA. Current law states a commissioner shall be an individual producer, or a partner or employee of a producer, who is actively engaged in growing fresh grapes within this state for a period of at least five years and is producing grapes subject to this chapter at the time of the election. Current law states no more than two members shall be persons employed by, or connected in a proprietary capacity with, the same corporation, firm, partnership, association, or business entity, provided that not more than one member in any district shall be so employed or connected. A commissioner shall maintain these qualifications during their term of office in order to remain on the commission.³

3. The bill provides for specific venue provisions for suits by the CTGC and against the CTGC and a two year statute of limitations

The bill provides specific statutes governing where venue for an action by the CTGC occurs—at the domicile or place of business of the defendant or in the county of the principal office of the CTGC. Additionally, the bill provides that any suit brought against the CTGC must be brought in the county of the principal office of the CTGC. The bill further provides that any action by the CTGC for a violation must be commenced within two years from the date of discovery of the alleged violation. Any action against the CTGC by a person must be commenced within two years from the date of the act of which the person complains.

² Keith Loria, *California Table Grape Commission launches new global marketing campaign*, The Produce News, (Jul. 11, 2024), available at <https://theproducenews.com/grapes/california-table-grape-commission-launches-new-global-marketing-campaign>.

³ Sen. Agriculture Comm. analysis of AB 482 (2025-26 reg. sess.) as amended May 13, 2025 at pp. 3-4.

SUPPORT

California Table Grape Commission (sponsor)

OPPOSITION

None received

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending Legislation: None known.

Prior Legislation: None known.

PRIOR VOTES

Senate Agriculture Committee (Ayes 5, Noes 0)

Assembly Floor (Ayes 74, Noes 1)

Assembly Appropriations Committee (Ayes 14, Noes 0)

Assembly Agriculture Committee (Ayes 7, Noes 0)
