



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Submitted on:**  
**(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** Agricultural Commissioner  
**Department No.:** 051  
**Agenda Date:** February 10, 2026  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Jose Chang, Agricultural Commissioner/Director  
Contact: Noah Beyeler, Deputy Commissioner  
**SUBJECT: Resolution Approving and Authorizing the Existing County Ag Pass Program  
Managed by the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office**

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: Choose an item.

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a resolution to approve and authorize the existing Ag Pass Program in Santa Barbara County, authorizing the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office to continue managing the program and issuing identification documents granting qualifying agricultural and livestock producers and managerial employees, at the discretion of emergency personnel, access to the qualifying agricultural and livestock producer’s farm and ranch property during or following a natural disaster.
- b) Determine that the above actions are organizational and administrative activities of government that are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**Summary Text:**

This item is on the agenda for the Board of Supervisors to consider a resolution (Attachment A) authorizing the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office to continue managing and implementing the existing County Ag Pass Program for the purpose of issuing identification documents granting qualifying agricultural and livestock producers and their managerial employees, at the discretion of emergency personnel, access to their farm and ranch property during or following a natural disaster.

### **Discussion:**

The implementation of California Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) section 2350, on January 1, 2022, provides local jurisdictions with the option to establish a Livestock Pass Program for the purpose of issuing identification documents granting qualifying livestock producers, or their managerial employees, access to the qualifying producer's property, or with permission, to the agricultural property owned by another pass holder, during a flood, storm, fire, earthquake, or other disaster. FAC section 2350 authorizes the County Agricultural Commissioner, upon approval by the County Board of Supervisors, to establish such a livestock pass program within the county.

FAC section 2350 allows that Livestock Pass Programs established prior to January 1, 2022, are only in compliance with FAC section 2350 through December 31, 2025, unless approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Santa Barbara County already has an existing Ag Pass Program, established in early 2021, which is managed by the Agricultural Commissioner's office alongside County Fire and the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council. The current Ag Pass Program provides a uniform way for emergency response and law enforcement personnel to identify vetted commercial agricultural operators and their employees during disasters. Possession of an Ag Pass card during a wildfire or other disaster *potentially* allows the cardholder limited emergency access to areas that may otherwise be restricted to the public, in order **1) to protect or care for livestock (through moving, evacuating, feeding, watering, or administering veterinary care), 2) to conduct irrigation-related activities for crops, and/or 3) to provide support information to emergency personnel (such as identifying access roads and water points).**

Ag Pass cards are intended to be applied for by and distributed to eligible commercial agricultural operators and/or their managerial employees before a disaster. The application process is designed to confirm that the cardholder is a commercial agricultural owner-operator or managerial employee whose services are essential to providing protection or care to livestock and/or agricultural crops. Individuals eligible for the Ag Pass must be owners and managerial personnel who have a working knowledge of the agricultural property, including access to irrigation systems, farm equipment, and other essential infrastructure.

Possession of an Ag Pass card does not necessarily mean the cardholder will be able to access restricted areas during a disaster. Front-line law enforcement and emergency personnel are empowered to use discretion when it comes to protecting emergency crews and the public from unnecessary exposure to risk. While a valid Ag Pass card may allow the cardholder access to their agricultural property, access will not be permitted if front-line personnel determine conditions are unsafe.

### **Background:**

The Santa Barbara County Ag Pass Program was initially implemented in 2021 prior to the implementation of FAC section 2350. Multiple agencies in Santa Barbara County participated in the initial program development, including:

- Agricultural Commissioner's Office
- County Fire Department
- County Counsel
- County Executive Office
- Fire Safe Council
- Agricultural Advisory Committee

- University of California Cooperative Extension
- Sheriff's Office
- Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau

Currently, there are 68 active Ag Pass holders in the county, and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has seen a steady need for the program during recent wildfires and disasters.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The work required for the Agricultural Commissioner's Office to implement and manage the Ag Pass Program will continue to be completed utilizing existing appropriations in the department's General Fund. There are no new costs associated with the continuation of this program.

**Staffing Impacts:**

Continued implementation of the existing Ag Pass Program will not result in any new staffing impacts. The program will continue to be managed and administered utilizing existing staff resources within the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Current staff have the capacity to maintain the ongoing workload associated with the program as part of their regular duties. No new staff positions are required.

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – Ag Pass Program Resolution

**Attachment B** – Ag Pass Program Description and Eligibility Information

**Contact Information:**

Noah Beyeler  
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner  
nbeyeler@countyofsb.org