

Assembly Bill 243

California Beef Commission

Assemblymember Jim Cooper

SUMMARY

AB 243 will establish the California Beef Commission (Commission), which will work in partnership with the California Beef Council (Council) to promote the collective interests of California's beef and cattle producers as a California marketing advisory and promotional agency.

BACKGROUND

The Council was created by the Legislature in 1967 to serve as a marketing advisory and promotional agency for California beef and cattle producers. The Council is also in charge of implementing the National Beef Promotion and Research Act enacted under the 1985 Farm Bill. California and federal law establish a mandatory \$1 assessment that is collected at the point of sale for all cattle changing ownership in California. Fifty cents is retained in California for use by the Council and fifty cents is appropriated to the Cattlemen's Beef Board which administers the national Beef Checkoff Program. As such, the use of the funds currently allocated to the California Council is subject to oversight and regulation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A majority of California cattle producers have expressed their interest in increasing the mandatory assessment on the sale of cattle in California but want to ensure that any increase in the Beef Checkoff benefits Californian ranchers and is not subject to rules and regulations under the National Beef Promotion and Research Act.

AB 243 will establish the Commission which will function solely as a California marketing and promotional agency and will have no official association with the Cattlemen's Beef Program.

The Commission, under the oversight of California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), will serve as a partner of the Council, capitalizing on the use of joint resources between the two agencies, but will also maintain a clear separation in the collection and allocation of funds dispersed by the Commission.

AB 243 only establishes the framework for the Commission and requires the Secretary of CDFA (Secretary) to first seek approval of a majority of producers in the state prior to its formation. This referendum will also include an additional mandatory \$1 assessment on the sale of cattle in California to fund the Commission. The bill also includes a refund provision that directs CDFA to refund the \$1 assessment collected on each head of cattle sold at the request of a producer who has paid the assessment.

The bill also includes a pathway to terminate the mandatory \$1 assessment and the Commission as a whole should eligible producers find no additional value in the Commission serving as a marketing advisory and promotional agency.

SUPPORT

California Cattlemen's Association
(Sponsor)
Butte County Cattlemen's Association
San Joaquin-Stanislaus Cattlemen's
Association

Ventura County Cattlemen's Association
Western United Dairymen
8 Ranchers and Cattle Producers from San
Joaquin – Stanislaus County Cattlemen's
Associations

STATUS

Senate Agriculture Committee – June 20th

CONTACT

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