

USHBC MEMO

To: Jeanette Palmer, USDA
From: Amanda J. Griffin, Vice President of Engagement and Education
Date: September 4, 2025
Re: USHBC State Member Nominations to the USHBC Board (*2026 to 2028 term*)

The USHBC Industry Engagement Committee has completed its nominations and election process for State Member and Alternate positions to the USHBC Council for the 2026-2028 term.

USHBC sent a press release notifying the industry of the start of the election period, noting that USHBC supports and encourages diversity in its membership. This outreach included notification to specific groups to encourage women, minorities, and people with disabilities to participate and seek membership.

USHBC's outreach was to 13 agriculture media outlets, including American Fruit Grower, FreshPlaza, Fresh Fruit Portal, The Packer; cooperative extensions; organizations representing underserved groups (32), such as minorities in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences, the National Black Farmers Association, professional agriculture workers and tribal organizations; state blueberry commissions and associations; the USHBC stakeholder blueberry distribution list; and in the monthly "Behind the Blues" publication.

Each state commission (WA, OR, CA, GA, NC, NJ, MI) solicited names from its membership and presented them to their boards to vote for the member and alternate positions and two backup candidates. Then, this slate was forwarded to the council for submission to the USDA for official appointment. The eighth state, Florida, does not have a state commission, so it is done via nomination and balloting via email. The Florida Blueberry Growers Association notified its stakeholders and posted the information on its website.

The Industry Relations Committee contacted the industry via email, mail, and website postings to solicit candidates for the importer and exporter member and alternate positions. USHBC also asked each participating council or commission to post the notification/press release on their websites and notify their stakeholders.

For the exporter #2 (Canada) positions, each country follows a similar process as the state commissions. They solicit names from their industry membership and present them to USHBC for submission to USDA for official appointment.

For importer positions, the USHBC Industry Relations Committee contacts the industry via email, mail, and website postings. USHBC also asks each state committee to post the notification/press release to their websites and notify their stakeholders. Once nominations are received, the committee

reviews and votes for a member, an alternate, and two backups from this list of candidates to submit to the USDA for official appointment.

The USHBC Industry Relations Committee has completed its election and nominations for State Member and Alternate positions to the USHBC Board of Directors. Based on those results, USHBC recommends the following individuals for appointment:

FLORIDA

Nominated by the blueberry growers of Florida:

Brittany Lee	Member received 54% of the vote	(Brittany Lee, Member Incumbent)
Michael Hill	Alternate received 46% of the vote	(Michael Hill, Alternate Incumbent)

Based on this vote, USHBC presents Brittany Lee for the Florida State Member position and Michael Hill for the Florida State Alternate Member position.

CALIFORNIA

Nominated by the California Blueberry Commission:

Doug LaCroix	Member	(Doug LaCoix, Member Incumbent)
Mandy Critchley	Backup #1	
Randy Grimm	Alternate	(Bill Steed, Alternate Incumbent)
Spencer Steed	Backup #2	

Based on the California Blueberry Commission's recommendation, USHBC presents Doug LaCroix for the California State Member position and Randy Grimm for the California State Alternate Member position.

GEORGIA

Nominated by the Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Blueberries:

Tammy Brannen	Member	(Tammy Brannen, Member Incumbent)
Brandon Wade	Alternate	(Brandon Wade, Alternate Incumbent)

Based on the Georgia Blueberry Commission's recommendation, USHBC presents Tammy Brannen for the Georgia State Member position and Brandon Wade for the Georgia State Alternate Member position.

MICHIGAN

Nominated by the Michigan Blueberry Commission:

Dennis Vander Kooi	Member	(Dennis Vander Kooi, Member Incumbent)
Rob Bodtke	Backup #1	
George Fritz, Jr.	Alternate	(George Fritz, Jr., Alternate Incumbent)
Dave Reenders	Backup #2	

Based on the Michigan Blueberry Commission's recommendation, USHBC presents Dennis Vander Kooi for the Michigan State Member position and George Fritz, Jr., for the Michigan State Alternate Member position.

NEW JERSEY

Nominated by the New Jersey Blueberry Industry Advisory Council:

Matthew Macrie	Member	(Paul Macrie, III, Member Incumbent)
Cecilia Allende	Alternate	(Chelsea Consalo, Alternate Incumbent)

Based on the New Jersey Blueberry Industry Advisory Council's recommendation, USHBC presents Matthew Macrie for the New Jersey State Member position and Cecilia Allende for the New Jersey State Alternate Member position.

NORTH CAROLINA

Nominated by the North Carolina Blueberry Council:

Kristen J. Brinkley	Member	(Kristen J. Brinkley, Member Incumbent)
Neil Moore	Alternate	(open seat)

Based on the North Carolina Blueberry Council's recommendation, USHBC presents Kristen Brinkley as North Carolina State Member and Neil Moore as North Carolina State Alternate Member.

OREGON

Nominated by the Oregon Blueberry Commission:

Ellie Norris	Member	(Doug Krahmer, Member Incumbent)
Tom Avinelis	Backup #1	
Anna Jesse	Alternate	(Ellie Norris, Alternate Incumbent)
Derek Eisele	Backup #2	

Based on the Oregon Blueberry Council's recommendation, USHBC presents Ellie Norris for the Oregon State Member position and Anna Jesse for the Oregon State Alternate Member position.

WASHINGTON

Nominated by the Washington Blueberry Commission:

Satvir Gill	Member	(Bryan Sakuma, Member Incumbent)
Michele Cherchi	Backup #1	
Bryan Sakuma	Alternate	(Leif Olsen, Alternate Incumbent)

Based on the Washington Blueberry Council's recommendation, USHBC presents Satvir Gill for the Washington State Member position and Bryan Sakuma for the Washington State Alternate Member position.