



**Prospective Member Objectives:**

*Please list the skills and experience you would bring to the USHBC, areas of the blueberry industry of the most interest to you (marketing, research, finance, etc.), and what you would like to accomplish as a USHBC member.*

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**USHBC Diversity Outreach Policy**

The USHBC has adopted a diversity outreach plan to attempt to achieve a diverse representation on the council. USHBC programs are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, parental status, and marital or family status. It is USHBC policy that membership on the council and its committees reflect the diversity of individuals served by its programs. To accomplish this objective, the USHBC will strive to attain representation of growers and other industry participants from diverse backgrounds on the council and USHBC committees. To this end, the USHBC strongly encourages women, minorities and persons with disabilities to seek nominations to the USHBC and to participate in council and USHBC committee activities. If you have questions concerning this nomination procedure or the final balloting process, please contact the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111.

*According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0093. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.*

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; 2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or 3) email: [program\\_intake@usda.gov](mailto:program_intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**SUMMARY**  
**BLUEBERRY PROMOTION, RESEARCH AND**  
**INFORMATION ORDER FOR CULTIVATED BLUEBERRIES**  
**U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council**

Background

The North American Blueberry Council (NABC) submitted a proposal for a national promotion program for blueberries (the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council) on December 2, 1998. The program is implemented under the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996. The final rule implementing the order was published in the Federal Register on July 17, 2000.

Initial Referendum Results

Before the program could be implemented, it had to be approved by producers and importers. Approval was determined by a majority of producers and importers voting for approval who also represented a majority of the volume of blueberries represented in the referendum.

In order to be eligible to vote, a producer or importer must have produced or imported 2,000 pounds or more of cultivated blueberries during the period from January 1, 1999 to December 31, 1999 (representative period). The referendum was conducted by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service from March 13 through April 14, 2000.

Results of this referendum, announced on July 13, 2000, showed that 67.8 percent of those who voted favored implementation of the Blueberry Promotion, Research and Information Order. Those who voted in favor represented 73.2 percent of the volume of cultivated blueberries represented in the referendum.

Continuance Referendum Results

As required under the Order, a continuance referendum is conducted every five years to ascertain whether continuance of the Order is favored by producers and importers of blueberries. A referendum was conducted by mail from July 5 to July 28, 2016 with 74 percent of those who voted favoring continuation of the order. Those voting in favor represented 80 percent of the volume of cultivated blueberries represented in the referendum. Based on these results, the order will continue. In accordance with the provisions of the Order, blueberry producers and importers will be provided another opportunity to participate in a continuance referendum in the year 2021.

Assessments

The Order authorizes a fixed assessment to be paid by producers (collected by handlers) and importers (collected by the U.S. Customs Service) at a current rate of \$18 per ton. Assessments are used to pay for: promotion, research, and information projects; administration, maintenance, and functioning of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC); and expenses incurred by the Secretary of Agriculture in implementing and administering the Order, including referendum costs.

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## U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

The current twenty member U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) administers the program under the supervision of the Secretary of Agriculture. The USHBC is represented by one member and alternate from each of the following regions:

<u>Western</u>	<u>Midwest</u>	<u>Northeast</u>	<u>Southern</u>
Alaska	Illinois	Connecticut	Alabama
Arizona	Indiana	Delaware	Arkansas
California	Iowa	New York	Florida
Colorado	Kansas	Maine	Georgia
Hawaii	Kentucky	Maryland	Louisiana
Idaho	Michigan	Massachusetts	Mississippi
Montana	Minnesota	New Hampshire	North Carolina
Nevada	Missouri	New Jersey	Oklahoma
New Mexico	Nebraska	Pennsylvania	Puerto Rico
Oregon	North Dakota	Rhode Island	South Carolina
Utah	Ohio	Virginia	Tennessee
Washington	South Dakota	Vermont	Texas
Wyoming	Wisconsin	Washington D.C.	
		West Virginia	

There is also one member and alternate from each of the top eight blueberry producing states. For the current nomination and election period, state representatives are to be elected from Michigan, Oregon, Georgia, Washington, New Jersey, Florida, North Carolina and California. Four importers and alternates, two exporters and alternates, one first handler and alternate, and one public member and alternate also serve on the USHBC. Producers are nominated directly by state commissions or producers. All other members are nominated by the USHBC.

The duties of the USHBC include the following: develop annual budgets; appoint members of the USHBC to serve on committees; develop and evaluate projects of promotion, research, and information, and pay the costs of such projects; collect assessments; receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary complaints of violations of the Order; recommend amendments to the Order; employ a staff to administer the program; prepare and submit to the Secretary financial reports; and cause the books of the USHBC to be audited. The Secretary oversees the activities of the USHBC. In addition, the USHBC recommends to the Secretary regulations to carry out the terms of the Order.

### Subsequent Referenda

Every five years, the Secretary of Agriculture will hold a referendum to determine whether producers and importers of cultivated blueberries favor the continuation of the Order. The Order will continue if it is favored by a majority of producers and importers voting for approval who also represent a majority of the volume of blueberries represented in the referendum. In addition, the Secretary may hold a referendum at any time after the effective date of the program.

Additional referenda may be requested by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council or 10 percent of all cultivated blueberry producers and importers.

**U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council**  
**81 Blue Ravine Rd., Suite 110**  
**Folsom, California 95630**  
**Ph: 916-983-0111 Fax: 916-983-9022**  
**Website: [www.ushbc.org](http://www.ushbc.org)**

**TO:** Highbush Blueberry Industry Members

**FROM:** Andrea Ricci, Marketing Specialist  
Specialty Crops Program  
Promotion and Economics Division

*AR*

**DATE:** January 22, 2021

**SUBJECT:** 2022 U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council Nominations

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC), which administers a national research and promotion program for highbush blueberries, is seeking nominees to fill seven member and seven alternate member seats on the USHBC. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which oversees the program, would like to encourage all eligible industry members to participate in the process. In an effort to enhance the diversity of the USHBC, USDA also encourages women, minorities and people with disabilities to seek positions on the USHBC.

As you may know, the USHBC is composed of 20 members and 20 alternates that are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The USHBC meets throughout the year to review marketing and research activities and make recommendations to USDA regarding its programs. The national program became effective in 2000 and is funded by assessments on domestic producers and importers. The purpose of the program is to increase the consumption of highbush blueberries.

The seven member seats and seven alternate seats to be filled include: four producer members and alternates from the four regions (Western, Midwest, Northeast, and Southern); one importer member and alternate; and one exporter producer<sup>1</sup> member and alternate; and one public member and alternate. The USHBC will seek nominations for members and alternates from the specific regions. Nominations will be returned to the USHBC office and placed on a ballot which will then be sent to producers in the region for a vote. The USHBC's Industry Relations Committee will recommend a slate of potential importer, exporter, and public member nominees to the USHBC's Executive Committee. The USHBC will then submit two nominees for each member and each alternate position to USDA. All seven positions are for a 3-year term of office beginning January 1, 2022.

Nomination applications for the regional producers, importer, exporter and public nominees are due to the USHBC by **March 5, 2021**. Applications are available at [www.ushbc.org](http://www.ushbc.org) or from the USHBC.

If you are interested in increasing your involvement in the blueberry industry, we encourage you to consider running for a position on the USHBC. Detailed information on the process is being provided to you by the USHBC. If you would like more information on the program or on serving on the USHBC, please contact the USHBC office, at 916-983-0111 or by email at [elections@blueberry.org](mailto:elections@blueberry.org); or the Promotion and Economics Division at 202-720-9915.

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<sup>1</sup> This position represents producers that ship blueberries into the United States from the largest foreign blueberry production area (currently Chile).