



**Assessment Steering Committee
Tuesday, April 8, 2025
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. PT
Videoconference**

Tom Bodtke, Chair, presiding

MINUTES

Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Tom Bodtke at 11:36 a.m. PT on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Committee Members Present: Tom Bodtke, Denny Vander Kooi, Andres Armstrong (joined 12:30pm) Gunnar Avinelis, Shelly Hartmann, Brittany Lee, Jody McPherson, Brad Moorer, Ellie Norris, Brandon Raso, Paul Sangha, Luis Miguel Vegas, Brandon Wade, and Bryan Sakuma, USHBC Chair

Committee Members Absent: Rodrigo Aceves

USDA/AMS Representative: Jeanette Palmer

Guests: Dan Barber with Fleishman-Hillard

Staff Members Present: Kasey Cronquist, Joe Vargas, and Melinda Kern

QUORUM PRESENT

Approval of Agenda

ACTION 1: Motion made to approve the agenda for Friday, March 14, 2025 with the removal of item 3.

Motion seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairs Comments

Tom Bodtke welcomed new committee members Paul Sangha and Brandon Raso. Bodtke reviewed the committee's role: to provide the USHBC Council with an assessment rate recommendation.

Establishing a New Timeline

Bodtke shared thoughts on the possible assessment increase timeline acknowledging the upcoming Council Retreat and additional state commission meetings where members could provide insight on the assessment discussion. The committee discussed a timeline on how best to provide the council with an assessment level recommendation based on gathering further input from growers.

Brad Moorer shared a summary of MBG's letter to the industry which highlighted their organization's support for \$36/ton and the solidarity of support he hears from the growers he speaks to for this level.

Bodtke opened the floor for discussion and discussion ensued.

Educate the Educators

Shelly Hartmann shared that resources and communication tools were being developed to support USHBC volunteer leadership in assisting with grower to grower conversations and education on the need for an assessment increase. Hartmann also shared that she was working with Bryan Sakuma on being responsive to requests for more information from Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan, New Jersey and Georgia. Hartmann emphasized the value she's experienced of providing physical materials to growers that they can take home and read, study and understand. She recommended that the USHBC consider sending out a mailer to all the growers that provides similar information and invites them to reach out to the council to learn more and get any of their questions answered.

Items and Scheduling of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held in May.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m. PT on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.