



**Assessment Steering Committee
Thursday, May 22, 2025
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PT
Videoconference**

Tom Bodtke, Chair, presiding

MINUTES

Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Tom Bodtke on Thursday, May 22 at 9:02 a.m. PT.

Committee Members Present: Tom Bodtke, Denny Vander Kooi, Andres Armstrong, Shelly Hartmann, Jody McPherson, Brad Moorner, Ellie Norris, Brandon Raso, Luis Miguel Vegas, and Bryan Sakuma, USHBC Chair

Committee Members Absent: Rodrigo Aceves, Gunnar Avinelis, Brittany Lee, Paul Sangha, Brandon Wade

USDA/AMS Representative: Sarah Richardson

Guests: Dan Barber with Fleishman-Hillard, Brian Bockock

Staff Members Present: Kasey Cronquist, Amanda Griffin, Alyssa Houtby, Joe Vargas, and Melinda Kern

QUORUM PRESENT

Approval of Agenda

ACTION 1: Motion made to approve the agenda for Thursday, May 22, 2025.

Motion seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chairs Comments

Tom Bodtke thanked the committee for attending, shared some recent industry feedback he had received and emphasized the need to continue as USHBC leadership to reach out to the blueberry community and listen to growers.

Outreach Updates

The committee shared overall sentiments from their regions on the proposed assessment increase. Some noted the positive feedback from the additional information the grower packets and regional visits have provided. A general support for an assessment increase was expressed, though there are varied concerns regarding; price/ton, timeline and the use of the funds collected. Guest Brian Boccock shared recent experience at a meeting in Georgia, organized by Georgia's USHBC volunteer leadership.

The committee discussed the continued need for sharing information, making grower to grower connections and increasing awareness to those who may not actively participate in USHBC meetings. Shelly Hartmann and Kasey Cronquist provided an update on the grower mailer, which will now include a QR code to assist with the vast reach of information.

Assessment Rate Recommendation Discussion

Tom Bodtke led discussion and asked for feedback on possible assessment rate increase amounts.

At Bodtke's request, Cronquist reviewed current MOU contribution conversations. Cronquist does believe the MOU contributors remain committed and perhaps open to a gesture of good will in an increased amount should the assessment increase pass.

The committee did not vote on an assessment rate increase recommendation at this time. A timeline of late summer, early fall - post harvest- was discussed for a possible recommendation to the council.

Items and Scheduling of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held in July.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m. PT on Thursday, May 22, 2025.