



## USHBC Council Meeting

**Monday, October 20, 2025**  
**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PT**

**Virtually**

**Bryan Sakuma, Chair, Presiding**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Bryan Sakuma at 10:01 a.m. on Monday, October 20, 2025.

**Council Members Present:** Doug LaCroix, Brittany Lee, Tammy Brannen, Denny Vander Kooi, Paul Macrie, Kristen Johnson-Brinkley, Bryan Sakuma, Nathan Sakuma, Katelyn Craig, Brandon Raso, Jody McPherson, Gonzalo de Elizalde, JC Clinard, Ryan Lockman, Joe Barsi, Juan Pablo Vogt, Mark Adams, Daniel Bustamante, Miguel Mendez, Bill Cline and Past Chair Shelly Hartmann (non-voting)

**Council Alternates Present:** Guy Cotton, Raul Gonzales Chavez, Michael Hill, Bonnie Lundblad, Andrew Maiman, Ellie Norris, Dan Register, Brandon Wade

**Council Members Absent:** Doug Krahmer

QUORUM PRESENT

**USDA/AMS Representative:** Jeanette Palmer and Sarah Richardson

**Staff Members Present:** Kasey Cronquist, Kevin Hamilton, Amanda Griffin, Melinda Kern, Jared Ruggles, Shaun Rundle and Leslie Wada

**Legal Counsel:** Ann Grottveit

**Guests Present:** Andres Armstrong, Dan Barber, Brian Bocoock, Tom Bodkte, Ross Courtney, Jerome Crosby, Mark Davis, Chad Don, Ken Gilliam, Teddy Koukoulis, Bonnie Lundblad, Luis Miguel Vegas, and Dave Reenders.

## **Approval of Consent Agenda**

ACTION 1: Motion made to approve the consent agenda for Monday, October 20, 2025.

Motion seconded.

Shaun Rundle clarified that the public comment section of the October 10, 2025 meeting Minutes needs to be corrected to show that Gerard Krewer advocated for Health & Research to be separated from the Promotion Committee for its own focus, not see it as part of the committee.

Motion to approve as amended with the above correction was passed 20-0 with one abstention.

## **Chair Remarks**

Bryan Sakuma welcomed guests, including NABC board members, acknowledged the work of Chair Tom Bodtke and the Assessment Steering Committee, and recapped the years of industry conversations and meetings to get to this vote.

Sakuma noted the work started by Past Chair Shelly Hartmann to ensure the support and collaboration of the majority of growers.

## **President's Report**

Kasey Cronquist highlighted the MOU contributors and their impact to this process, and echoed the thanks for every participant who engaged in conversations over the last several years.

## **Assessment Steering Committee Recommendation**

Bryan Sakuma presented the steering committee's recommendation and asked for discussion.

Bryan invited Brandon Raso to present and discuss the letter from the New Jersey Blueberry Advisory Council.

Brandon Raso presented and spoke to the New Jersey Blueberry Advisory Council's letter of support for \$24/ton and the council's desire to ensure that growers understand the direction of USHBC and how the dollars are being spent to accomplish its mission. Raso reiterated that New Jersey believes in and supports the council.

Discussion ensued on the support letters that had been received and the commitment letter of support for an additional \$14/ton from all of the current MOU contributors and SunBelle. It was clarified that the voluntary \$14/ton is predicated on a mandatory \$36/ton for fresh.

Discussion ensued on the overall outreach effort that spanned over two years that included forming the assessment steering committee, grower meetings in all of the eight states, multiple conference calls to engage industry stakeholders on this subject.

A discussion ensued on the need to further efforts of outreach and to continue to engage growers and industry stakeholders on the importance and value of USHBC.

Sakuma thanked everyone for the discussion and asked for a motion to approve the Assessment Steering Committee's recommendation.

**ACTION 2:** Motion to approve the steering committee's recommendation to increase the assessment rate to \$36/ton for fresh and \$30/ton for processed, with the expectation that rigorous accounting and performance benchmarks would be reported back to the Council.

Motion seconded.

Motion carried with 16 votes in favor, and 5 votes against.

### **Next Steps with USDA**

Shaun Rundle discussed the next steps for USHBC staff to complete the Justification Packet as a result of the vote taken, and Jeanette Palmer of AMS highlighted the timeline of steps to be taken by USDA.

### **Public Comment**

Mark Davis commented on the lack of market data available and reflected his opposition to the assessment increase.

### **Scheduling of Next Meetings**

Council will expect to meet in December 2025 to discuss Strategic Planning.

Council will next meet in person on March 6, 2026 at the Industry Meetings in Washington, D.C.

### **Adjournment**

**ACTION 3:** Motion made to adjourn the meeting on Monday, October 20, 2025.

Motion seconded.

Motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m. PT on October 20, 2025