

Justification of Change Worksheet
OMB Vegetable and Specialty Crops
OMB No. 0581-0178

Marketing Orders:
No. 989 Raisins produced from grapes grown in California.
No. 981 Almonds Grown in California

December 9, 2024

This Justification for Change seeks OMB's approval on updates to forms for two marketing orders.

First, this Justification for Change seeks corrections to two forms that are part of OMB No. 0581-0178: Raisins produced from grapes grown in California, Marketing Order No. 989 (7 CFR part 989). The Market Development Division (MDD) uses these forms to assess the California raisin industry's support for or opposition to proposed amendments to the California raisin marketing order.

The proposed changes to the following two forms are as follows:

- 1) **Producer Referendum Ballot on Proposed Amendments to Marketing Order NO. 989** SC-224 (7 U.S.C. § 608c (19)): Growers in the California raisin industry use this form to vote either in support of or opposition to proposed amendments to the California Raisin marketing order.
- 2) **Cooperative Association Ballot on Proposed Amendments to Marketing Order NO. 989**, SC-225B (7 U.S.C. § 608c (19)) Cooperative association in the California raisin industry use this form to vote either in support of or opposition to proposed amendments to the California Raisin marketing order.

Currently, both forms require growers to provide a Tax Identification Number (TIN), which has been used in the past by MDD to validate ballots and determine organizational affiliation and identity. However, MDD no longer requires this information to validate ballots and thus recommends removing this requirement and its associated references. The removal of this requirement will eliminate the line requesting TIN information under Question two on form SC-224 and remove the explanatory note referencing the TIN on both forms.

Secondly, MDD has recommended the removal of the references to the Fresno Cooperative Raisin Growers, which no longer exists. Removing such references will streamline the balloting process and ensure that only eligible entities are voting. This change would eliminate the two questions related to the non-existent cooperative association under Question 2 on Form SC-224.

Lastly, AMS plans to conduct an amendatory referendum on amendments proposed during a public hearing in February 2024. The current ballot questions are based on a prior hearing conducted in 2016. MDD recommends revising the ballot questions on both forms to align with

the proposed changes from the 2024 hearing. The changes listed above will not affect the burden hours for the producers or cooperative associations completing these forms.

Second, this Justification of Change seeks OMB approval on a revision to Form ABC-15, that is a part of OMB No. 0581-0178: almonds grown in California Marketing Order No. 981 (7 CFR Part 981) The Almond Board of California (Board) uses this form to locally administer the Federal marketing order for California almonds under the Agricultural Marketing Service's oversight.

The proposed change to the following form is as follows:

- 1) **Almond Board of California Ballot for Independent Growers**, ABC-15: Ballot used in the election of Independent Grower Members and Alternates for the Almond Board of California.

This form includes a section for growers to sign their name and provide their title for election ballots submitted to the Board. The Board has noted that it can sometimes be difficult to identify a grower based solely on their signature. To address this, they have requested that an additional line be added to the form for growers to print their name alongside their signature. Making this change would enhance the integrity of the election process and would enable the Board to use the revised form for future elections.