

AGRICULTURAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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February 21, 2014

To: All Interested Parties

Re: Proposed Relocation of Agricultural Labor Relations Board El Centro Subregional Office and Visalia Regional Office

ALRB SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON RELOCATION OF TWO ALRB OFFICES

The Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) is responsible for conducting secret ballot elections so that farm workers in California may decide whether to have a union represent them in collective bargaining with their employer; investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating unfair labor practice disputes; and providing education to inform all parties about their rights and responsibilities afforded by the Agricultural Labor Relations Act. The ALRB is tasked with serving over 648,000 agricultural employees and 35,000 employers across the state. Towards providing this service, the ALRB has maintained two regional offices located in Visalia and Salinas and two subregional offices in El Centro and Oxnard.

The ALRB now seeks comments on the proposed relocation of its offices currently located in El Centro and Visalia.

El Centro Subregional Office

In 2007, the El Centro office was downsized from a regional office to a subregional office due to low election and unfair labor practice activity. This low level of activity has continued despite vast agricultural operations and numerous farm worker communities in the Imperial Valley. Population shifts, changes in immigration enforcement, and close proximity to the border may be contributing factors.

Maintaining an agency presence in the Imperial - Coachella Valley area is a prime concern to the Board. The Coachella Valley, primarily the rural Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) made up of Indio, Coachella, Thermal, Oasis, Mecca, and North Shore, is a major hub for agricultural production in Riverside County and California as a whole.¹ In addition, most of the farm

¹ London, et al., *Revealing the Invisible Coachella Valley* (June 2013) p. 2

workers who work in the Coachella Valley also live there year-round in the communities of Mecca, Thermal, Coachella and Indio.²

For these reasons, the Board proposes to relocate the El Centro office to a location that will serve the entire Coachella Valley and surrounding areas. The location needs to provide maximum accessibility to the farm workers and employers served by the ALRB. Additionally, staff would be made available to reach out to more remote areas towards serving all of the surrounding areas.

Visalia Regional Office

The existing Visalia regional office can no longer physically accommodate the needs of the agency and the public it serves. As a result of increasingly inadequate facilities, including public parking, at the current site, the ALRB must relocate to a more suitable site in Visalia or a nearby city. The Visalia office serves a vast area of the Central Valley. The new office location will need to service areas as far north as Stockton and south to Bakersfield. As with El Centro, the location needs to provide maximum accessibility to the farm workers and employers served by the ALRB and be reachable by public transportation.

The Board is seeking comments regarding potential relocation sites for both El Centro and Visalia. Please send your written responses by March 12, 2014 to J. Antonio Barbosa, ALRB Executive Secretary, via:

Mail: Agricultural Labor Relations Board
1325 J Street, Suite 1900
Sacramento, CA 95814

Email: jbarbosa@alrb.ca.gov

² Colletti, et al., *County of Riverside Coachella Valley Farm Worker Survey: Final Report* (January 2007) p. 3