



CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION
of WINEGRAPE
GROWERS



Referendum -- Pierce's Disease Control Program

Frequently Asked Questions

When do the ballots go out?

The referendum will likely begin in April 2025.

When do I need to return the ballot?

Please return the ballot as soon as possible. The referendum is typically conducted over a 30-day period, with up to an additional 30-day extension if needed. The referendum will likely end around May or June 2025.

What is the deadline for completion of the referendum?

It is CDFA's goal to have all ballots returned by early June at the latest and the referendum complete prior to the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2025).

Who do I contact if I didn't receive a ballot?

Please contact Miranda Townsend or Denise Sanchas with CDFA's Marketing Branch at (916) 900-5018. Denise.Sanchas@cdfa.ca.gov or Miranda.Townsend@cdfa.ca.gov.

The referendum list is based on information CDFA Marketing Branch gets from wineries via a referendum certification form and grower information worksheet that was recently sent out. It is only based on growers who paid assessments this harvest year (July 2024 to June 2025).

Growers that did not pay the PD Assessment this year, such as if they did not harvest this year, will not be included. Wineries must return the grower information to CDFA by January 10 (same due date as the grape crush). If a grower paid the assessment but ceases operations sometime between paying the assessment and receiving a ballot this spring, they can contact the phone number or emails above or write on their ballot that they are no longer a grower and return it.

Who do I contact if there is something wrong with my ballot?

Please contact Miranda Townsend or Denise Sanchas with CDFA's Marketing Branch at (916) 900-5018. Denise.Sanchas@cdfa.ca.gov or Miranda.Townsend@cdfa.ca.gov.

What if I received multiple ballots? Do I need to mail them all?

Each entity is entitled to one ballot. One person could own multiple entities; therefore, one person could receive multiple valid ballots.

Ballots will be addressed to whomever wineries/processors indicate to CDFA during the list creation. The signature line will have additional information about who has authority to vote. If a grower representative receives a ballot but decides they do not have authority to sign, they should share it with someone in their organization who does or they can reach out to the phone number or emails above with questions.

What do I do if I receive multiple ballots in error?

If this happens or other corrections are needed, please contact Miranda Townsend or Denise Sanchas with the Department's Marketing Branch at (916) 900-5018 Denise.Sanchas@cdfa.ca.gov or Miranda.Townsend@cdfa.ca.gov.

You may also make a note on any duplicate ballots you receive and mail them back to CDFA. It is important to correct potential duplicate ballots to ensure the response rate is accurate because of the 40% return requirement below.

Can I cast my vote online? Via e-mail?

No. If you are an eligible voter, you should receive a ballot by mail. Please cast your ballot via the mail-in process spelled out in the letter accompanying your ballot.

What is the vote threshold for approval of continuing the PD/GWSS Board and the program?

OK. This is complicated. At least 40% of ballots must be returned. The threshold for approval of continuing the program is either of the following:

- (a) At least 65% of those voting, representing a majority of assessments paid, vote "yes"
- OR
- (b) A majority of those voting, representing at least 65% of assessments paid, vote "yes".

What is the current assessment?

The current assessment rate is \$1.25 per \$1,000 of value of grapes crushed for wine, concentrate, juice, wine vinegar, and beverage brandy.

What is the money from the assessment used to support?

State law dictates that assessment funds be spent on research and other activities related to Pierce's disease and its vectors, particularly the glassy-winged sharpshooter, including, but not limited to, research of integrated pest management and other sustainable industry practices. Since 2010, assessment funds may also be used for

research and outreach for other designated grape pests and diseases
<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/pdcp/board/assessmentandreferendum.html>.

Below are some specific examples of research and other uses of assessment funds:

1. Helped eradicate European grapevine moth by using assessment funds for outreach and treatment coordination activities
2. Helped control GWSS by using assessment funds for urban rapid response treatments.
3. Development and release of PD-resistant winegrape varieties.
4. Developing genetic (CRISPR) tools to disrupt the transmission of PD by GWSS (<https://news.ucr.edu/articles/2022/05/03/new-technology-offers-fighting-chance-against-grapevine-killer>)
5. Development of a grape tissue culture and genome editing platform: <https://academic.oup.com/hr/article/11/1/uhad266/7471737>
6. Addressing knowledge gaps to understand how PD causes disease and spreads in vineyards, such as this recent publication: <https://doi.org/10.1093/aesa/saae033>
7. Supported Lodi Winegrape Commission's publication of What Every Winegrower Should Know: Viruses and related activities: <https://lodigrowers.com/growereducation/viruses/>
8. Identification and confirmation of three-cornered alfalfa hopper as a vector of red blotch virus: <https://blogs.cornell.edu/fuchslab/2023/05/08/the-three-cornered-alfalfa-hopper-is-a-vector-of-grapevine-red-blotch-virus-in-vineyards/>
9. Other virus and mealybug extension work such as work led by Monica Cooper <https://www.ajevonline.org/content/74/2/0740036#sec-21>
10. Remote sensing for virus detection in presymptomatic vines <https://www.winebusiness.com/wbm/article/288915>
11. The [National Academy of Sciences review of leafroll and red blotch viruses](https://www.nationalacademies.org/catalog/11060/california-agricultural-research-priorities-pierces-disease) final report with research priority recommendations; this also follows the first NAS report funded by the board on PD published in 2004: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/11060/california-agricultural-research-priorities-pierces-disease>