

Criteria for NOSB Alternates and Substitutes

Board Procedures Task Force Report to the Board Board Alternates and Substitutes June 10, 1999

Discussion

The Task Force has researched the issue of appointments of alternate NOSB members and the question of allowing members to provide a substitute in their absence. In our investigation, we have found that some other advisory committees under USDA do in fact have alternates. Alternates are reimbursed for expenses to attend Board meetings only in the absence of a member whom they are representing. Because the appointment of NOSB members by the Secretary of Agriculture is specifically set out in the Organic Foods Production Act, the statute would have to be amended in order for the Secretary to appoint alternates. The Task Force would **not** recommend the pursuit of any legislative changes to OFPA until after its complete implementation. At some time in the future the Board may recommend legislative changes based upon the evolution of the industry and the need to update procedural language. As of this writing, we are waiting to see statutory language that allows the appointment of alternates to other Boards and will reference this information in developing a future resolution to the Board.

Other boards such as the Agriculture Research and Extension Advisory Board do not have a provision for alternates but allow a member to appoint a substitute in their absence. The substitute may take notes on behalf of the absent member at public Board meetings and on teleconferences in which the member should be present. The substitute may not vote on Board actions, participate in Board discussion unless requested to do so by the Board, sit at the Board table or in any manner participate with the Board other than as a member of the attending public.

In consideration of the existing precedents, the Task Force presents the following proposal.

Recommendation

Be it resolved by the National Organic Standards Board:

That members of the board shall be permitted to designate a substitute in their absence to take notes and collect information on their behalf at public Board meetings and to listen in on teleconferences to which the member is expected to participate. The substitute may present documents, proposals and recommendations on behalf of the absent member and may be called upon by Board members to offer explanation of the submitted material.

The substitute may not vote on Board actions, sit at the Board table, or participate in Board discussion except when requested to do so by Board members. The substitute may participate as a member of the public at open meetings and may offer public testimony on their own behalf. The substitute will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred in attendance at NOSB meetings. In all cases, the designated substitute is a representative of the Board member, not the member's affiliation or business.

Carolyn Brickey moved.

Rod Crossley seconded.

Call for the vote

Vote:

Those In Favor: 10

Those Opposed: 0

Those Abstaining: 1