



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DR. TIM BORING
DIRECTOR

NOTICE OF MEETING

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

January 31, 2024

The regular meeting of the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development will be held on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. The business session is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. The meeting is open to the public and this notice is provided under the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.261 to 15.275. The Commissioners will be meeting at Michigan State University Federal Credit Union Headquarters 2, Conference Room, 3899 Coolidge Rd, Michigan 48823. This meeting is also being conducted electronically to allow for greater remote public attendance and participation. To join the meeting via Microsoft Teams: by telephone dial: **1-248-509-0316** and enter the Conference ID:**976 540 72#** or by video conference visit www.michigan.gov/mdard/about/boards/agcommission to join the day of the meeting.

In accordance with the Commission's Public Appearance Guidelines, individuals wishing to address the Commission may pre-register to do so during the Public Comment period as noted below and will be allowed up to three minutes for their presentation. Documents distributed in conjunction with the meeting will be considered public documents and are subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The public comment time provides the public an opportunity to speak; the Commission will not necessarily respond to the public comment.

To pre-register to speak virtually during this meeting, individuals should contact the Commission Assistant **no later than Fri. January 26, 2024**, via email at MDA-Ag-Commission@michigan.gov and provide their name, organization they represent, address, and telephone number, as well as indicate if they wish to speak to an agenda item. You may also contact the Commission Assistant at that email address to provide input or ask questions on any business that will come before the Commission at the meeting. The Commission Chair will call upon each person by name and telephone number when it is time for them to speak and there will be a meeting moderator facilitating participation. All others wishing to speak will be provided two minutes to do so. Instructions on how to be recognized will be provided at the beginning of the meeting.

Those needing accommodations for effective participation in the meeting should contact the Commission Assistant at 800-292-3939 one week in advance or may use the Michigan Relay Center by calling 711 for deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired persons.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Boring".

Tim Boring
Director

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MSUFCU Headquarters #2
3899 Coolidge Rd
East Lansing, MI

Option to Join via Remote Technology
Dial: 1-248-509-0316; Conf. ID 976 540 72#

January 31, 2024 TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 10:30 a.m. 1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
- Introduce New Commissioner
2. **Approval of Agenda (action item)**
3. **Approval of Minutes** from the November 8, 2023, Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development Meeting (**action item**)
4. **Next Scheduled Meeting** (information only)
- March 13, 2023
- 10:40 a.m. 5. **Commissioner Comments and Travel (action item)**
- 10:50 a.m. 6. **Commissioner Issues**
- Election of New Officers (**action item**)
 - Retirement Resolution – James Johnson (**action item**)
- 11:00 a.m. 7. **Director’s Report**
- 11:10 a.m. 9. **Budget Update:** Sylvia Renteria, Director of Finance and Budget (information only)
- 11:20 a.m. 10. **Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Requests:** Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Division Director, Agriculture Development Division (**action item**)
- 11:30 a.m. 11. **Presentation from the Greenhouse Growers Council on GAAMP Request:** Jared Rodriguez, Greenhouse Growers Council and Mike Wozniak, Right to Farm Manager, Bureau of Environment and Sustainability.
- 11:50 a.m. 11. **Public Comment**
In accordance with the Public Appearance Guidelines in the Commission Policy Manual, individuals wishing to address the Commission will be allowed up to three minutes for their presentation. Documents distributed at the meeting will be considered public documents and are subject to provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The public comment time provides the public an opportunity to speak; the Commission will not necessarily respond to the public comment.
- 12:00 p.m. 12. **Adjourn (action item)**

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 8, 2023

PRESENT:

Andy Chae, Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Monica Wyant, Vice Chair, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Juliette King-McAvoy, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dr. Felicia Wu, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
David Williams, Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
Dr. Tim Boring, Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Chae called the meeting of the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to order at 10:30 a.m. on November 8, 2023. Chair Chae called the roll with Commissioners Chae, Wyant, King-McAvoy, Wu and Williams and Director Boring present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KING-MCAVOY MOVED TO APPROVE MEETING AGENDA FOR NOVEMBER 8, 2023. COMMISSIONER WYANT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 11, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 11, 2023, MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER KING-MCAVOY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

PROPOSED 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND TRAVEL

Commissioner King-McAvoy stated it was another record year for the apple crop. Farmers were hoping the apples would last until next fall in storage. The Commissioner expressed concern with farmers having issues with supply, especially boxes.

Commissioner Wyant expressed the same excitement for Michigan produce production this fall as Commission King-McAvoy. Many of the Meijer retail locations are prepping for the Thanksgiving holiday offering Michigan onions, potatoes and squash.

Commissioner Chae finished their Community Supported Agriculture for the year, which marks their end of the season, but still growing for wholesale accounts. The Commissioner did finish up planting garlic before the weather changed.

Commissioner Williams' farm finished their soybeans two weeks before the meeting and were starting to focus on corn. The Commissioner shared his travel to the department potluck and awards ceremony the day before. He was impressed with the employees and the food they provided.

Commissioner Wu recently attended two conferences at MSU. One regarding PFAS and another on reducing water use and increasing yields. In December she will be attending the Harvard School of Business with a focus on Agriculture Business. Commissioner Wu will also be attending a Society for Risk Analysis meeting in December, which she will be leading.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER KING-MCAVOY MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMISSIONERS' TRAVEL. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Chairman Chae invited Mr. Ben Schram, Private Lands Forestry Manager in the Environmental Stewardship Division, and Mr. Kevin VanGieson, of the Qualified Forest Program in the Environmental Stewardship Division, to the table to honor Mr. VanGieson on his upcoming retirement. Mr. Schram gave a highlight of Mr. VanGieson's career at the department. The commission expressed gratitude and congratulations to Mr. VanGieson.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED THE RETIREMENT RESOLUTION FOR KEVIN VANGIESON BE ADOPTED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director expressed it had been a busy couple of weeks. The main highlight was the annual potluck and awards ceremony, which the Governor attended, the day before. The Director expressed gratitude to the team that put the event on. The Deputy Secretary from USDA visited Michigan highlighting USDA's investments in Rural America. With the realignment to a bureau structure, the department continues to grow. Positions are being backfilled. The Department currently has positions posted a Chief Scientist and in Regenerative Agriculture.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Beatrice M. Friedlander, President, Attorneys for Animals, testified before the Commission.

Randy Buchler, testified before the Commission.

Ryan Lacovacci, testified before the Commission.

Brian Rogers testified before the Commission.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND REQUESTS

Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Division Director, Agriculture Development Division, introduced the grant application, Quality Roasters. They are in Reese Michigan processing soybeans into crude

Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development Meeting Minutes

Drafted on November 13, 2023

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oil; however, this new expansion will start processing into food grade oil. Erin Davis from Quality Roasting explained they currently are 100% sourced from local farmers.

The Commissioners asked if there were any challenges in sourcing, Ms. Davis explained it wasn't sourcing it was the competition with increase price, which was beneficial for the farmer. Commissioner Wu asked what happens to the byproduct, Ms. Davis explained that much of it is repurposed for livestock feed.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WYANT MOVED TO APPROVE A FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT FUND PERFORMANCE BASED GRANT OF \$150,000 FOR QUALITY ROASTING. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (GAAMPS) – PROCESS AND INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED 2024 GAAMPS:

Mike Wozniak, Right to Farm Manager, Environmental Stewardship Division, came forward to answer any additional questions from the GAAMPS introduced at the prior meeting and reviewed the Commission's responsibilities to the GAAMPS

For the Care of Farm Animals GAAMP, Mr. Wozniak called up Dr. Madonna Benjamin, Chair, to review the proposed changes to the 2024 GAAMP. Commissioner Chae asked about the changes in debeaking in egg layers. Dr. Benjamin explained it was due to the pecking and mortality of laying hens, causing the least amount of pain. Commissioner Wu asked about the new pharmaceutical revisions to the GAAMPS; Dr. Benjamin explained it was related to changes by the USDA that the producer had to have a prescription, so the veterinary client patient relationship was enforced because that reduced access to in feed medications.

Commissioner King-McAvoy asked how a GAAMP is created to address a new area of concern raised by the public related to mushrooms. Mr. Wozniak expressed the Commission Policies to create a new GAAMP. Commissioner King-McAvoy also asked if environmental standards were considered when revising the GAAMPS. Mr. Wozniak explained the GAAMPS use scientific standards presented for environmental standards.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2024 GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR CARE OF FARM ANIMALS WITH CHANGES AS PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED. COMMISSIONER KING-MCAVOY SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Wozniak invited Mr. Gerry May, Chair of the Site Selection GAAMP, to come forward to answer additional questions. Chairman Chae asked if MDARD received a nuisance complaint, from a facility that has completed siting, what the process would be. Mr. Wozniak explained they would revisit the location to review complaint and if the facility is following the plan MDARD approved. If they are not following the plan, then they would need to update their management to reflect the approved plan to bring the farm into conformance. Commissioner Chae asked that for future discussions if a representative from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy would be present to answer any additional questions.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2024 GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SITE SELECTION WITH CHANGES AS PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Wozniak honored Chairman Safferman who recently retired as the chair of the Manure Management and Utilization GAAMP. Mr. Wozniak also offered additional information on the proposed changes. Commissioner Wu asked Mr. Wozniak on the difference between staging or stock-piling manure. Mr. Wozniak explained staging is a temporary location while stock-piling would fall under a longer term storage option which includes additional requirements under the Manure Management and Utilization GAAMP.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2024 GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR MANURE MANAGEMENT AND UTILIZATION WITH CHANGES AS PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED. COMMISSIONER WU SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Wozniak introduced Dr. John Wise, Chair of the Pest Utilization and Pest Control GAAMP. Chairman Chae asked what changes were made for loud noise nuisance for best practices. Dr. Wise said they looked to Dr. Catherine Lindahl from Michigan State University on her research on blueberries and cherries in bird control and bird management best practices.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WU MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2024 GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR PEST UTILIZATION AND PEST CONTROL WITH CHANGES AS PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Wozniak stated the Irrigation GAAMPs Chair, Younsuk Dong, was present for any questions, however there were no major revisions to the GAAMP. Mr. Wozniak honored Dr. Harrigan, the Chair to the Nutrient GAAMP, upon his retirement, however there were no changes in 2024. Mr. Wozniak also informed the Commission there were no additional changes to the Cranberry and Farm Market GAAMP for 2024 and Mr. Ryan Coffey-Hoag, chair of the Farm Market GAAMPs was also present to answer any questions if needed.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2024 GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FARM MARKET, IRRIGATION, CRANBERRY AND NUTRIENT, AS PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED. COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Randy Buchler testified before the Commission.

Brian Roger, a Leelanau County resident, testified before the Commission.

Megan Tinsley, representing the Michigan Environmental Council, testified before the Commission.

ADJOURN

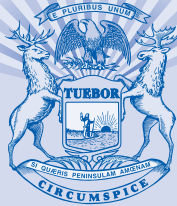
MOTION: COMMISSIONER KING-MCAVOY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER WYANT SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:08 P.M.

Attachments:

- A) *Agenda*
- B) *Agriculture and Rural Development Commission Meeting Minutes October 11, 2023*
- C) *Proposed 2024 Meeting Schedule*
- D) *Retirement Resolution for Kevin VanGieson*
- E) *Food and Agriculture Investment Fund Request – Quality Roasting*
- F) *Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPS) –Proposed 2024 GAAMPS*

STATE OF MICHIGAN



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MICHIGAN COMMISSION OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING

Jim Johnson

WHEREAS, The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development is pleased to honor Jim Johnson upon his retirement from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on January 4, 2024; and,

WHEREAS, Jim was born in Escanaba, Michigan, and in 1984 graduated from Michigan Technological University, with a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Biology; and,

WHEREAS, Jim began his career in state government with the Michigan Department of Agriculture in 1987, as the Michigan Energy Conservation Program Assistant Program Coordinator within the Environmental Stewardship Division working with conservation districts in establishing and implementing the Michigan Energy Conservation Program. In 1990, Jim transitioned to a Regional Field Staff position assisting with Conservation District program development and operations including adherence to conservation district law. From there, Jim moved to the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division as a Program Manager. Jim was responsible for two Gypsy Moth statewide programs to minimize the negative impacts on Michigan forest products industry and private forest landowners. In May 2002, Jim was selected as the Environmental Stewardship Division Conservation Programs Section Manager responsible for conservation and land management programs. In March 2008, Jim accepted the position of the Environmental Stewardship Division Director charged with providing administration and oversight of several programs including: the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, Right to Farm Program, Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program, Intercounty Drain Program, Migrant Labor Housing Program, and Conservation Programs; and,

WHEREAS, Jim always went above and beyond in his contribution at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development where he used his leadership skills, education, and many talents to perform his many job duties. He will always be remembered for his humor, positive attitude, mentoring, and in general, his good nature which contributes to the culture of the department, and is valued by his peers, division management, and the Executive Office; and,

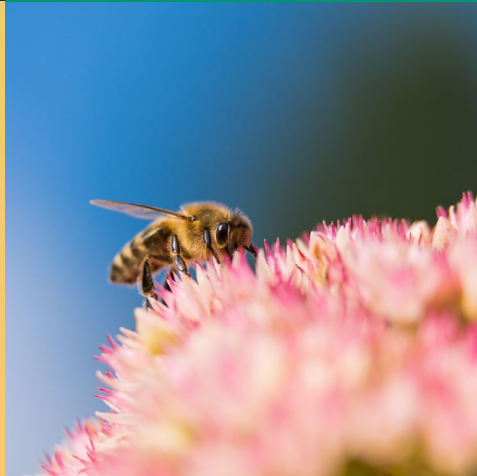
WHEREAS, Jim and his wife, Tricia, have 4 children: Chris, Erica, Ron and Victoria, with 10 grandchildren: Miranda, Ben, Xander, Grayson, Ronald, Anne, Addilynn, Trevor Jr, Harrison and Harper; and,

WHEREAS, Jim looks forward to retirement years, enjoying time with his family, adding to his personal wine cellar collection, and spending time at golf courses across the country.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development thanks Jim Johnson for his more than 35 years of dedicated and loyal service to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the food and agriculture industries, and to the people of the State of Michigan. The Commission joins Jim's family, friends, and colleagues in wishing him a long and happy retirement and great success with future endeavors.

Adopted
Lansing, Michigan


Andrew Chae, Chair



Budget Update

Sylvia Renteria

Director of Finance and Budget

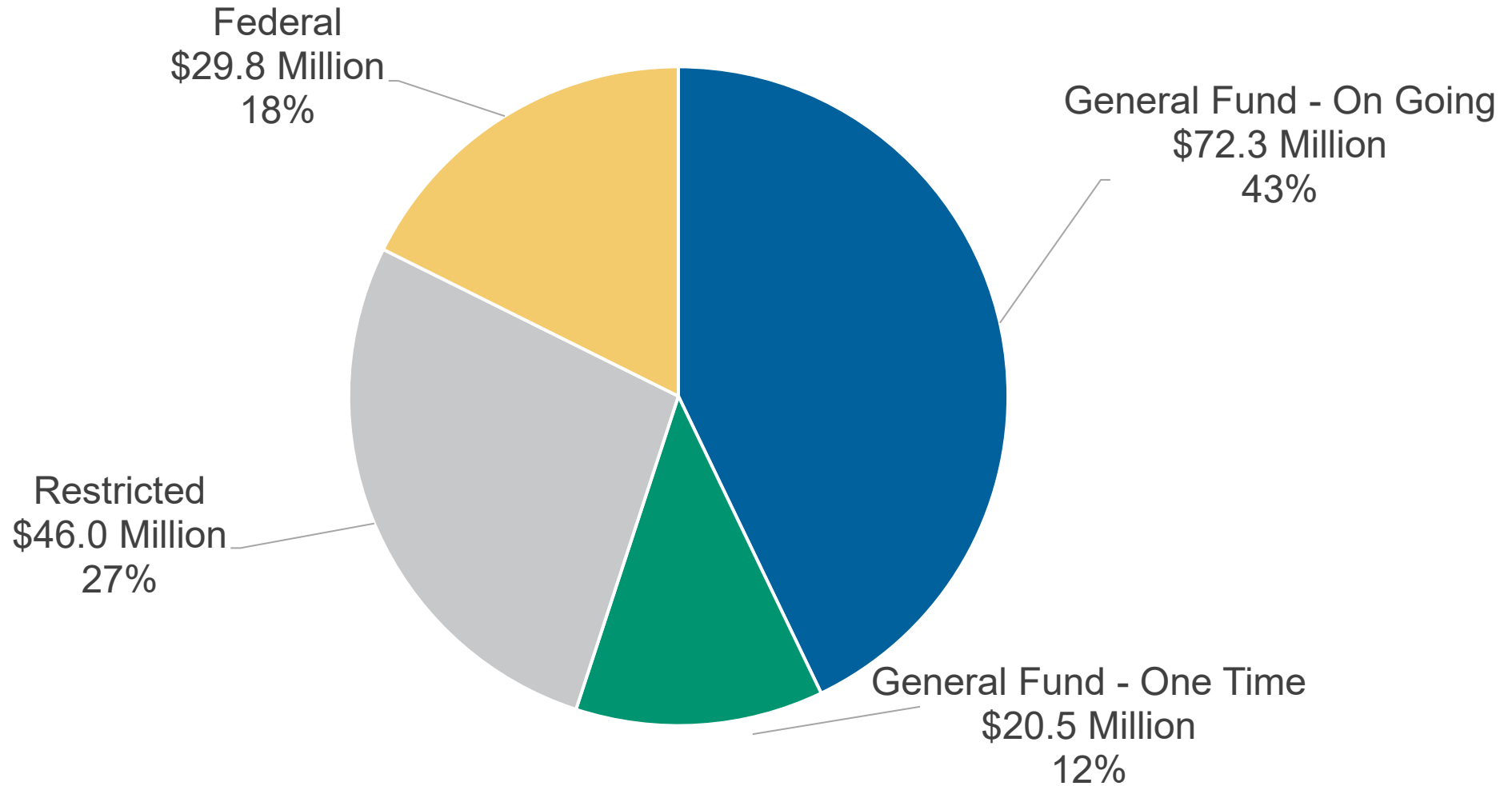
January 31, 2024



Fiscal Year 2023

- Financial statements completed
- Audit in progress
- Statewide report to be issued soon

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget



Total: \$168.6 Million

Year to Year Comparison

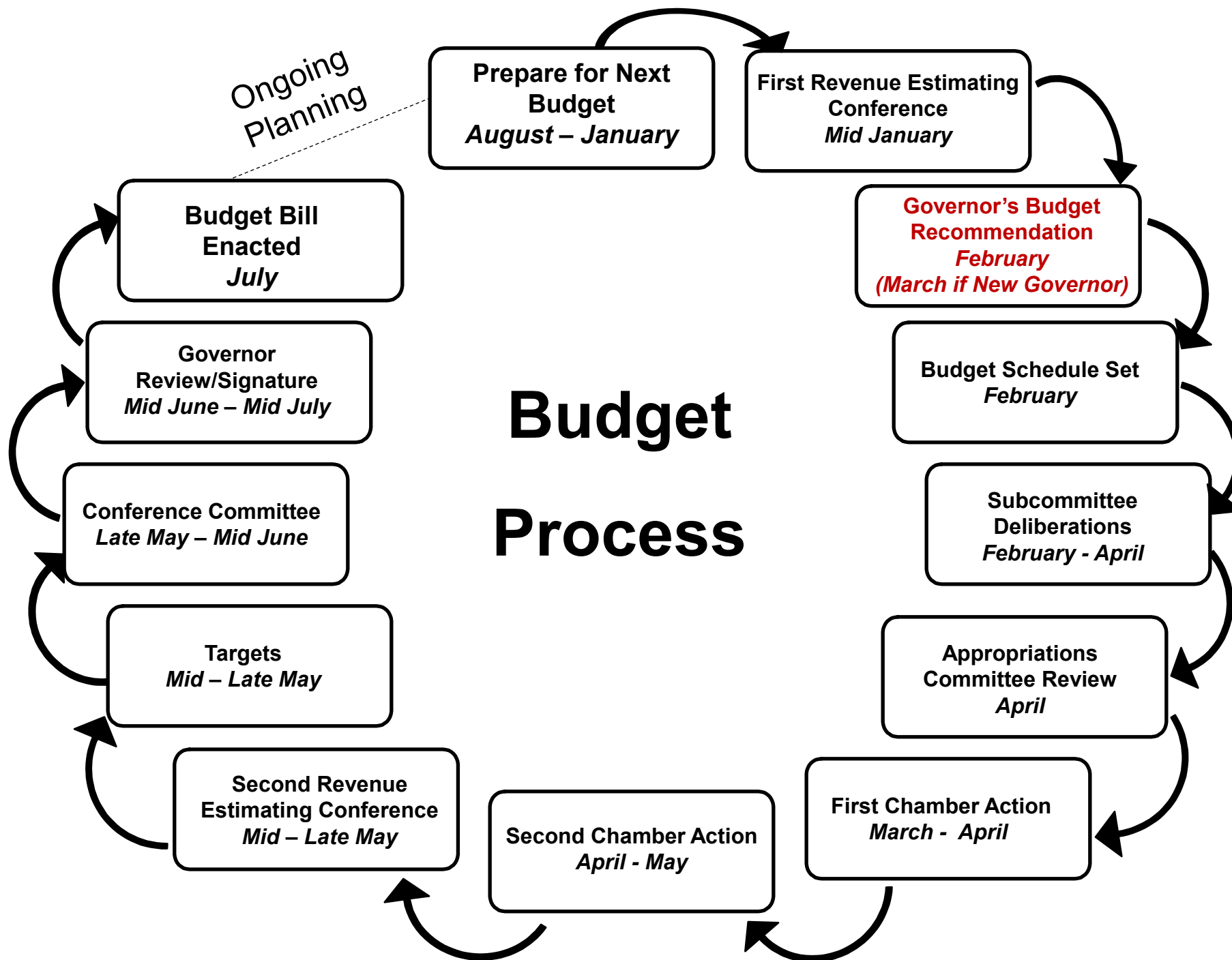
Funding Source	2023 Budget *	2024 Enrolled	Increase (Decrease)	Percentage Change
General Fund - Ongoing	\$ 65,989,800	\$ 72,281,800	\$ 6,292,000	10%
General Fund - One Time	\$ 67,000,000	\$ 20,500,000	\$ (46,500,000)	(69%)
Restricted	\$ 45,054,400	\$ 46,068,200	\$ 1,013,800	2%
Federal	\$ 19,930,900	\$ 29,762,700	\$ 9,831,800	49%
TOTAL	\$ 197,975,100	\$ 168,612,700	\$ (29,362,400)	(15%)

* Includes HB 4437 supplementals



Fiscal Year 2025

- Statewide revenue projections show increase
- Executive recommendation first week of February
- Legislative process to follow





Director's Priorities

- Climate resiliency and regenerative agriculture
- Diversity in agricultural products
- Prosperity across Michigan
- Best place to work



Bureau Transition

- No changes to FY24 budget bill
- Realignment reflected in FY25



Thank you!





GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DR. TIM BORING
DIRECTOR

DATE: January 17, 2024
TO: Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development
FROM: Jamie Zmitko-Somers, Agriculture Development Bureau Director
SUBJECT: Precision Hardwoods Inc.

Background

Precision Hardwoods Inc., located in Onaway, MI has been a key player in the hardwood production business for more than 10 years. Precision Hardwoods specializes in high-quality, locally sourced, hardwood products. Their products include green industrial lumber, such as cants and pallet lumber, and grade lumber. Industrial lumber is currently sold for pallets, boxes, and flooring. Hardwood cants are used in railroad ties and as industrial lumber pallet stock. Grade lumber is used in flooring and furniture production.

Precision Hardwoods aims to enhance manufacturing capabilities through advanced machinery and workforce development to boost production and ensure a consistent and reliable supply of premium, locally sourced, wood products. The new project described below will expand and modernize the sawmill operation to increase production, allowing the use of small, pulpwood-grade logs, and create new jobs.

Project Description

The \$7,052,295 sawmill expansion and modernization project will create approximately 15 new jobs at Precision Hardwoods and involves construction of a new 8,000 square foot building, interior construction, and the installation/commissioning of advanced sawmill machinery, including a small sawlog mill system and associated lumber finishing and material handling equipment. The main goal of Precision Hardwoods is to increase manufacturing capacity almost 10-fold, from 25,000 board feet per day to 220,000 board feet per day, with a corresponding increase in log usage to meet the rising demand for both hardwood and softwood products. Their current green lumber markets include pallet, flooring, and box manufacturers like Acme Pallet (Holland, MI), S and L Sawmill (Leroy, MI), Yoder Boxes (Empire, MI), NEMROC (Alpena, MI), Whispering Pines (McBain, MI), Graber Lumber (Union City, MI), and Michigan Pallet at multiple Michigan locations. Precision Hardwoods also sells to pallet and railroad tie manufacturers and distributors in Indiana and Virginia. The addition of the small sawlog technology will increase industrial lumber production. The new mill system will allow them to saw products to customer width and length specifications, as compared to their current standard 8-inch and 10-inch saw system. This will eliminate the need for customers to remanufacture boards, reducing the clients' waste and residuals.

The new system will increase the use of small logs, like pulpwood. Currently, there is a lack of pulpwood markets caused by drop in usage at paper mills in the Upper Peninsula (Billerud) and swings in usage at board mills in the Eastern Upper Peninsula and Lower Peninsula. Being able

to increase usage of the small log/pulpwood grade material in their sawmill operation will support loggers, allowing them to continue operations and the sustainable management and harvesting of forests for landowners. With the recent closings of sawmills in the region due to a variety of reasons, the demand for industrial and grade lumber products has outpaced supply, reflecting a broader market for sustainable, locally sourced, wood materials. However, their current manufacturing capacity is insufficient to meet such a highly increasing demand. With this modernization and expansion, Precision Hardwoods will enhance production and efficiency, offer diversified product lines and innovative services for existing and new customers, and create new job opportunities within their community.

Impact on Michigan's Agriculture Industry

The main goal of Precision Hardwoods is to increase manufacturing capacity almost 10-fold, from 25,000 board feet per day to 220,000 board feet per day, with a corresponding increase in log usage to meet the rising demand for both hardwood and softwood products. Precision Forestry is under the same ownership as Precision Hardwoods and is the forest management, logging, and trucking business that supplies Precision Hardwoods and other regional forest product businesses. Precision Hardwoods' increased log demand will be met 30-40% from Precision Forestry and 60-70% from other logging businesses primarily in the Eastern Upper Peninsula and the Northern Lower Peninsula, two areas where loggers have been significantly impacted by the drops and swings in pulpwood market outlets.

The addition of the small sawlog technology will increase industrial lumber production and will utilize small pulpwood grade logs. Currently, there is a lack of pulpwood markets due to market related drops in production at pulpwood-using paper/board mills. The lack of pulpwood markets impacts the ability of loggers to harvest and stay in business. Harvests produce predominantly pulpwood product, accounting for over 70% of harvests' products. Being able to increase usage of pulpwood grade logs at the sawmill will support loggers, allowing them to continue operations and the sustainable management and harvesting of forests for landowners.

Also, with the increased lumber production, Precision Hardwoods will have additional clean chips and sawdust for Arauco in Grayling, MI to support their particleboard production. Precision Hardwoods currently sells bark to Michigan woody biomass power plants and will produce more bark with the increased production for this market.

The operation currently has approximately seven Michigan customers for industrial and grade lumber. The new mill will allow them to saw products to customer width and length specifications, as compared to their current 8-inch and 10-inch saw system. This will eliminate the need for customers to remanufacture boards, reducing the clients' waste and residuals.

Additional Impact

Precision Hardwoods' advanced sawmill equipment will be more energy efficient than the current sawmill by utilizing the latest in energy efficiency technology. This new system has a controlled electric start-up which will not over-load the electrical grid by using a soft-start that sequences powering on individual pieces of equipment.

Precision Hardwoods has secured Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Chain of Custody Certification which required an audit by a third party for compliance. FSC Chain-of-Custody certification traces the path of products from forests through the supply chain, verifying that

FSC-certified material is identified or kept separated from non-certified material throughout the supply chain. The FSC-certified material comes from forestlands that are 3rd party certified to sustainability standards that ensure the wood is harvested from forests that are responsibly managed, socially beneficial, environmentally conscious, and economically viable. Their additional production will support further sustainable management of Michigan forestlands. The expansion will create approximately 15 new jobs with full benefits. Specialized training programs for existing employees will enhance workforce skills, retention rates, and advancement opportunities. The project is expected to have a positive impact on employment, creating new job opportunities and retaining existing positions. The specialized training programs will contribute to developing a skilled and adaptive workforce in Michigan.

MDARD Staff Recommendation

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development staff recommend the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development approve a Food and Agriculture Investment Fund performance-based grant of \$100,000 for Precision Hardwoods Inc.