

**My name is Steve Kister. I am a small raisin producer farming 200 acres on overhead trellis, which is dried on the vine and mechanically harvested. I also farm 310 acres of almonds. I have served continuously on the RAC since first selected by the RBA in 1994 through 2002 and then selected by Sun Maid Growers from 2002 to the present. I have served as Director and past President of the RBA. In 2004, I was elected to the Board of Directors of Sun Maid Growers of California and served as Chairman of the Board the past 5 years.**

**I support the proposed downsizing of the RAC from 47 members to 21. It is a change in the raisin industry long overdue. More than 20 years ago, we were a much different industry. When we last amended the order in 2016, downsizing was proposed, but we only removed the reserve language as a result of the Supreme Court decision in 2015.**

**Today, the CA Raisin Marketing Order is the largest in the U.S. with 47 members. It is difficult to get a quorum at meetings. In the last 20 years, the industry has downsized in terms of acreage and production, Twenty years ago there were approximately 3,500 growers and today fewer than 1500.**

**The decision to reduce the order to 12 Grower and 8 Handler seats recognizes that it will continue to be a grower order. Today, virtually all Handlers are**

**Growers. The majority of the RAC budget is dedicated to export programs. Because these programs cover several countries and different markets, it is necessary to have broad Handler representation.**

**The provision to eliminate districts is to ensure we will be able to fill independent grower seats. Because the industry is located in a small geographic area, fair representation is not a concern. The elimination of the special seat needs to be seen in it's historical context.**

**The RBA was formed in 1966 to collectively bargain for raisins. The industry had to respond by making significant changes to the CA Raisin Marketing order in 1967.**

**The reserve system was amended so that every year a desirable free tonnage would be established. Volume controls were changed to permit producers to more fully benefit in arriving at field prices from the newly formed Bargaining Association. Free tonnage would be priced according to RBA's agreement and the reserve would be utilized for export and other channels. Successful pricing agreements required confidentiality by the RBA Manager so in 1967 they changed from 45 to 46 members to accommodate the RBA Manager. For the last 5 years the RBA has bargained for a uniformed price but it's attempts are**

**completely independent of RAC actions. With the elimination of the volume control provisions, a special seat is no longer warranted.**

**Today, the Raisin Administrative Committee operates in a far more similar fashion to other Ag Commodities with Federal Marketing Orders.**