



**ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF
CALIFORNIA'S AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE**

Carlos Villapudua, Chair

December 1, 2021, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 4202

Agricultural Technology Workforce – An Overview

Agriculture continues to be an important industry in California. California grows over a third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts. Agriculture in California is a \$54 billion dollar industry that generates at least \$100 billion in related economic activity.

California is also leading the nation in technological innovations. Our state has the critical ecosystem to support cutting-edge developments in this rapidly expanding ag-tech sector. California is also home to the nation's top Agricultural Sciences Universities, and 11 Tier 1 research universities making discoveries in everything from seed breeding to biofuel alternatives.

Today's agriculture continues to integrate new technologies such as automation, robots, temperature and moisture sensors, satellite imaging, and GPS technology. These systems are also allowing businesses to be more profitable, efficient, safer for workers, and more environmentally friendly.

Agri-Food Tech startups in California saw over \$4.9 billion in venture capital investment in 2019, by far the most of any state – twice as much as the remaining top 5 states combined and a quarter of the worldwide total. In order for California to continue to be at the forefront of technology and innovation in agriculture, it will be important for the state to continue to support the agricultural innovations and prepare the workforce to support these technological innovations.

The Select Committee on "**TECHONOLGY AND THE FUTURE OF CALIFORNIA'S AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE**" will allow members of the committee to explore this new evolving sector and identify potential opportunities to improve and create our agricultural workforce's skills.

The overarching goals of this Select Committee are to have a greater understanding the workforce needs of the ag-tech industry, and preparing the next generation of ag-tech workers. In order to understand where we are going we need to understand what we have been doing. The continued support of the ag-tech sector by the state of California requires an understanding of the role technology plays in agriculture, and what the state can do to prepare the next generation of agricultural tech workers.

This hearing is only one of a series of hearings throughout the coming months designed to inform members of the Legislature and the public on topics that intersect agriculture, technology, and our



agricultural related workforce. During today's hearing, we will begin our journey with a broad overview on the importance of an agricultural-technology workforce in California and we will hear from current practitioners who are developing and using ag-technology. We will hear about Ag-technology challenges, barriers, and opportunities and how it is likely to shape our future agricultural workforce.