



National Watermelon Promotion Board Holds February 14th, 2024 Convention to Nominate Importers to Serve as Directors

Contact: Rebekah Dossett January 10, 2024
NWPB Director of Operations & Industry Affairs

WINTER SPRINGS, FLORIDA – The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) will hold a nomination teleconference on Wednesday, February 14th, 2024 at 1:00 P.M. (EST) to nominate ten qualified watermelon importers to fill open positions as directors of the Board.

The NWPB encourages all women, minorities and persons with disabilities who qualify as watermelon importers to attend the meeting and run for nomination to the NWPB.

All watermelon importers are encouraged to attend and vote to nominate their representatives to the NWPB. Nominations are submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Secretary of Agriculture makes the final appointments to the NWPB. The newly appointed Board members term of office will begin on January 1st, 2025, and end December 31st, 2027.

The Board members administer promotion and research programs for watermelon. The NWPB works to increase consumer demand for watermelon and expand domestic and foreign markets through its marketing, consumer public relations and education programs. The non-profit Board works with an administrative staff to enact retail, foodservice and media promotions and research programs.

All Board members are required to attend two meetings each year to become familiar with and develop the Board's variety of marketing, research and education programs.

(More)

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The NWPB represents about 800 commercial watermelon producers, handlers and importers that finance all of the Board's programs through assessments on watermelons as authorized by the Watermelon Research and Promotion Act. The 30-member Board is currently comprised of 10 producers, 10 handlers, 9 importers, and a member who represents the public.

Board members are nominated by their peers, and nominations are submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, who makes final appointments to the Board. These board members oversee all aspects of the Board, including setting policies and deciding how the Board's budget is invested in promotion, research and education programs. The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the Board's operations.

To be eligible for nomination, Importer means any person who imports watermelons into the United States as a principal or as an agent, broker, or consignee for any person who produces watermelons outside of the United States for sale in the United State §1210.314 of the Watermelon Research and Promotion Plan.

Consistent with §1210.403, the NWPB will allow proxy voting for Board nominees. Individuals wishing to vote by proxy should prepare signed, dated statements, including the proxy voter's printed name, address, telephone number, identity as an importer, and the name of the individual authorized to cast the proxy vote. These statements should be given to those authorized to cast the proxy vote, who will then provide the statements to the NWPB no later than Tuesday, February 13th, 2024.

The importers appointed to the Board will represent the NWPB's interests, and should be dedicated to supporting the Board's marketing, promotion, research and education programs.

Additional information regarding the elections and nomination procedures may be obtained by contacting NWPB Director of Operations & Industry Affairs Rebekah Dossett (407) 657-0261, Ext. 204 or Industry Affairs Manager Andrea Smith (407) 657-0261, Ext. 205.

Individuals with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations and or alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, LEP, etc.) should contact: Rebekah Dossett within 7 days of event.



PROXY TO VOTE

KNOW ALL BY THESE PRESENTS:

Certified that I, _____, am an importer of watermelon, and do hereby nominate, constitute and appoint

_____ to be my representative (*a peer or NWPB Staff*), for me and in my name and stead, to vote in the National Watermelon Promotion Board Importer Teleconference to be held via teleconference on **Wednesday, February 14th, 2024 at 1:00 P.M. (EST)**, and all and any adjournments thereof, and to do and perform all and any act or things in my name and stead that I could do as an importer at said meeting or meetings.

I nominate: _____ of _____
(Name) (Company Name)

to serve as an Importer Director.

WITNESS my hand and seal this _____ day of _____, 2024.

Executed in the presence of:

Witness

Name

Witness

Company or Firm

Address

City

State Zip

Phone

Teleconference Call Information

Dial-In Number: (267) 930-4000

Participant Access: 132 049 880

To join the conference on your iOS Device, click this link: <http://rcconf.net/2lXHcoY>

Conferencing Tips:

Additional dial-in numbers: <https://ringcentr.al/2L14jqL>

To mute your line, press *#6 on your keypad.

Current 2022-2024 Importer Board Members:

Importer – Dalton Borders (2nd term – ineligible for nomination)

Importer – John Gee (2nd term – ineligible for nomination)

Importer – Jose Gomez (2nd term – ineligible for nomination)

Importer – Michael LeMieux (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

Importer – Ward Thomas (1st Term - eligible for nomination)

We need two names per position which will result in a total of ten names.

Importer 1:	A) _____	B) _____
Importer 2:	A) _____	B) _____
Importer 3:	A) _____	B) _____
Importer 4:	A) _____	B) _____
Importer 5:	A) _____	B) _____