

**SLO County Food System Coalition Meeting Minutes**

July 21, 2015, 4:00-6:00 PM, UCCE Auditorium

Attendees: Nicki Anderson, Karen Aydelott, Jaleah Brynn, Ellen Burke, Becca Carsel, Niko Comati, Joel Diringer, Kevin Drabinski, C.M. Florence, Janice Fong Wolf, Kylie Hensley, Stacey Hunt, Terri Knowlton, Teresa Lees, Linda McClure, Jen Miller, Christine Nelson, Susan Singley, Quillan Smith, Stephanie Teaford, Jeff Wade

**I. Collaborating with Assembly Member Katcho Achadjian’s Office:**

Presenter: Kevin Drabinsi, Senior Field Rep for State Assembly Member Katcho Achadjian.

Katcho Achadjian is the representative for California’s 35th State Assembly district. Kevin says people generally contact State Assembly Members to ask for help getting money or supporting a policy. They can also write letters of support for grants and letters of recognition.

To establish and maintain a relationship with your State Assembly Member, Kevin recommends:

* Planning an in-person visit every 9-12 months, either meeting the Assembly Member at their district office or inviting them to an event; and
* Being friends with legislative aids, who act as gate keepers and schedulers;

To advocate for policy, Kevin recommends:

* Contacting the Assembly Member’s office via letter, phone, or email – staff will reply to all forms of communication;
* Using original content in letters (as opposed to using form letters);
* Joining forces with people of common interest to submit one letter from a coalition vs. submitting many letters from individual people or organizations;
* Asking who is in support of the bill and who is expected to oppose (e.g., utilities, the Farm Bureau, transportation agencies) and addressing opposing views in your letter of support;
* Looking up the proposed legislation at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>, specifically viewing:
  + The most recent version of the bill as it is amended;
  + Who is supporting and opposing the bill;
  + Summaries in the Bill Analysis tab; and
  + The bill’s status, authors, and committees.
* Contacting the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the committee reviewing the bill; and
* Sending a copy of any letters of support to Katcho too, as well as to the committee.

The legislative calendar:

* Sept 11: Katcho’s last day in Sacramento.
* September-December: Katcho is in the district for introductions and meetings.
* January-September: Katcho is in Sacramento Sunday nights through Thursday afternoons.
* January-March: Bill introductions (Identify bills of interest early on).

Some information about Katcho Achadjian:

* Some of his priorities are health and education for youth, and food access and security for the elderly.
* He receives thousands of letters per year and responds to all of them.
* He pre-plans to get approval of committees on the first try.

**II. Overview of Different Types of Advocacy:**

Presenter: Joel Diringer

Joel posed the question: *What is your first impression of what advocacy means?* Some of our responses:

* Getting community support for something you’re trying to accomplish.
* Publicly sharing support for something.
* Moving beyond saying “we can’t do that”.
* Educating the public at large.
* Giving a voice to a group or landscape who doesn’t have a political voice.
* Getting people who care about something involved.
* Educating decision-makers about the needs of the people their decisions are affecting, so people involved have a means to have a voice so change can happen.
* Moving beyond complacency.
* To represent with the intent to clarify a goal; get support or an action.

Joel’s background includes working as a lawyer for California Rural Legal Assistance. He has a wide range of experience, from welfare hearings to Supreme Court cases. He reflected that the last advocacy workshop was mostly about lobbying and focused on legislative solutions, but there is a wider range.

Tools to bring about change and recommendations of how to be effective with each tool:

* Policy
* Litigation
* Electoral Process – candidates and ballot issues (which require a lot of money)
* Administrative Advocacy – work with agencies on a sub-legislative level; you can have broad policy, but the agencies are the ones who implement the policies.
  + Know your agencies and what they do. (e.g., RWQCB, Coastal Commission)
  + *Local folks are approachable and have authority to make decisions.* (e.g., IWMA banned plastic bags independently of the Board of Supervisors).
  + Invite agency staff people to meetings to break down silos.
  + Who to invite? It depends. But if you already are in relationships with people, it’s easier to decide who to partner with.
* Community Organizing (e.g., when the Planning Commission denied the Las Pilitas Quarry)
  + Do the research; know the issues, facts, and the opposition’s facts.
  + Think about who is listening and their framework; tailor what you say to who is listening and what they care about (e.g., economy, health, family values).
  + *It’s all about creating relationships*.
  + Be respectful.
  + Relationships start with shared experience (e.g., participating in Leadership SLO through the Chamber of Commerce, service clubs, coalition work groups).
  + Issues at the State and Federal level have more division. Issues at the local level are more about working through a shared issue, and there’s not as much ideological opposition because there is *shared context* (e.g., convening local focus groups about health care for rural farm workers).
  + Alliances and coalitions – learn each other’s languages to be able to communicate, particularly in agriculture; unsuspected alliances can form.
* Media
  + Letter writing (print and electronic)
  + Social media – does it influence policy? Maybe; the younger staff are more within that the legislators
  + Education campaigns to move public opinion (e.g., health coverage for undocumented children became part of the state budget this year)

**III. Announcements:**

Community Food Project (CFP) Grant Update:

See handout.

SLO City Farm (Tree):

* The 4th Saturday of every month is Family Day at SLO City Farm. The temporary offramp is under construction, so there is no access via Calle Joaquin. Instead, park at Target and follow the walking trail through Prefumo Creek.

Living Schoolyard Network (Tree):

* There is a statewide network call next week and a tri-county garden education symposium in October.

The Wellness Kitchen (Terri):

* They are developing a children’s menu to address children’s health and a garden-to-table program.

GleanSLO (Susan):

* There’s a film screening tonight of *Just Eat It* at the SLO Grange at 7pm about a couple who lived for a year without grocery shopping and eating food that would otherwise be thrown away.

Food Bank (Jen):

* Governor Brown released extra funding for people who are unemployed or underemployed. The Food Bank has boxes of shelf stable items with 2 bags of produce to distribute. Information is available on their website.

Farmers’ Guild (Niko):

* The next meeting will be on August 17.

Slow Money SLO (Jeff):

* Slow Money SLO is now a KivaZip Trustee to facilitate local micro loans.

**IV. *Go Glean* Documentary Short:**

A group of students from UCSB made a short documentary about gleaning:

Link: <https://vimeo.com/130576212>

**V. Work Group Updates:**

EBT (Stephanie):

* More farmers’ markets are accepting EBT
* The group has started conversations with Peter, the manager of the SLO Thursday and other markets, and the SLO County Farmers Market Association. They are working with Peter to try to problem solve potential obstacles. Peter will present the process to his Board of Supervisors and proceed from there.

Farm-to-School (Nicki):

* Nicki attended the first farm-to-school conference as a farmer trying to sell to schools with a CFP grant.
* She originally perceived farm-to-school as just a procurement issue, but learned that there is a push for a triangle of standards including 1) procurement, 2) school gardens, and 3) ag education and awareness.
* Some trends she’s seeing: CA Thursdays, and using online food hubs over brick-and-mortar locations.
* Niko started a Farm-to-School email list to become more connected, not just to expand the conversation, but to actually get things done.
* Goal: To have every district dedicated to Farm-to-School and have farms growing exclusively for schools.
* Focus: Start CA Thursdays in Paso and then replicate it. Have more parents involved to honor existing genuine interest.
* Method: Building relationships. Seeing connections not perceived before. Local 🡪 tri –counties 🡪 statewide.

Community Cafes (Stacey):

* The Founder of One World Everybody Eats, the organization that started the community cafes movement, is watching SLO’s model to potentially replicate in other communities.
* SLO’s Model: Established restaurants agree to have one sliding scale meal per month, as modeled by Panera Bread in St. Louis.
* SLO’s Goal: One participating restaurant per day of each month.
* Stacey is looking for volunteers to distribute flyers to restaurants to invite them to an educational event hosted by One World Everybody Eats to learn about what it would mean to be designated as a community café.
* Current participants: Bliss Café in SLO and Nature’s Touch in Templeton.

**VI. CA FPC Update: Joining Central Valley/Mountain Region:**

Presenter: Kylie

The FSC is a member of the California Food Policy Council (CA FPC), a network that is building capacity for statewide collaboration on food policy advocacy efforts. Part of the responsibility of being a CA FPC member is participating in regional collaboration. The SLO FSC currently is designated as a member of the SoCal Region (San Diego, LA, Orange County, Ventura, Santa Barbara). When Kylie attended the statewide CA FPC meeting in Sacramento in February, she felt that the SLO FSC has more in common with the Central Valley/Mountain (CV/M) Region in terms of food access and agricultural issues. The CV/M Region currently meets via conference calls and is thinking of switching to video calls and planning a series of webinars, one about food policy basic organizing strategies and one about food hubs.

Jen agrees that we have a lot in common with the Central Valley/Mountain Region in terms of food access. For example, a lot of the clients served by the SLO Food Bank commute back and forth between the Central Valley and the Central Coast. Becca sees switching regions as a way to build relationships to the east, since we are already collaborating with communities and agencies to the south in the tri-counties.

Kylie brought up the idea of switching regions to the administrative committee, and they agreed that we should, unless any coalition members at the meeting have any objections.

Question: *Does anyone object to the SLO FSC switching from the SoCal Region to the Central Valley/Mountain Region of the CA FPC?*

Response: No one objects.

Resolved: The SLO FSC will now participate as a member of the CV/M Region of the CA FPC.

**VII. Policy Updates:**

Presenter: Kylie

These are the updates on the three bills we have voted to support as a coalition:

HR 1061/ S 569: Farm to School Act of 2015

This bill was introduced simultaneously assigned to committees in both the House and the Senate on February 25. Both committees are still reviewing the bill. Senate committee: Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; House Committee: Education and the workforce 🡪 Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education.

AB 515: Tax Credit for California Agricultural Donations to Food Banks

This bill has passed appropriations and a floor vote in the Assembly and is being reviewed by the Senate Committee on Governance and Finance.

AB 1321: Nutrition Incentive Matching Grant Program

This bill has passed appropriations and a floor vote in the Assembly and is being reviewed by the Senate Agriculture Committee.

**VIII. Letter Writing Work Group:**

Presenters: Becca and Kylie

Is anyone interested in helping to write letters of support for the bills we have voted/will vote to support?

Yes, Karen, Jen, and Ellen are interested in helping. Kylie will follow up and coordinate via email.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 20 from 4-6pm at the UCCE Auditorium, 2156 Sierra Way**