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**California Strawberry Commission Hosts Legislative Event Celebrating National Strawberry Month**  
*Annual Legislative Reception provides opportunity for key legislators to hear directly from strawberry industry leaders on important issues impacting California strawberry farming*

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. – April 29, 2024** – As a kickoff to National Strawberry Month in May, the California Strawberry Commission (CSC) hosted its annual Strawberry Legislative Reception in Sacramento, bringing together California strawberry growers and legislators to discuss the current and future state of the industry. The reception builds on a long history of collaboration between elected officials and CSC on the industry’s behalf.

Growers and industry members met with California coastal state legislators, legislative and district directors, Chiefs of Staff, Senate and Assembly leadership, and the Governor's Office to discuss the unique opportunities of the industry that consists of about 400 growers, shippers and processors that produce 90% of the nation’s strawberries and create 70,000 jobs – investing 97 cents of every dollar back into strawberry farming communities.

CSC president, Rick Tomlinson, welcomed the crowd and highlighted the importance of California’s fourth highest grossing crop and its positive impact in the state of California – and its strawberry farming communities. He introduced several long-time strawberry growers from Santa Cruz to San Diego. Second-generation Watsonville strawberry grower and CSC Board of Directors vice chair, Peter Navarro, had this to say:

“Strawberry farming has given immigrants more ownership opportunities than any other major crop. My father and uncle, for example, began picking strawberries in the early 1960s and worked their way up to become the first Hispanic strawberry growers to own their own crop in Pajaro Valley,” said Navarro. “We all take great pride in what we do, especially growing a crop that comes with many challenges. On behalf of all the strawberry growers, we are thankful for your support to overcome obstacles and continue the legacy of growing the finest berries in the world.”

For more than 50 years, California’s strawberry farmers have exhibited a commitment to safety, the environment and their communities, pioneering breakthroughs in organics, resource conservation and integrated pest management solutions.

In addition to the Legislative Reception, the CSC represented the industry last month at Ag Day at the Capitol, the annual celebration recognizing California’s agricultural community and the bounty of commodities and crops produced in California. At the event, the CSC featured fresh California

strawberries and engaged with the state legislators, government leaders, regulatory staff and public citizens in attendance.

In February, Mark Martinez, vice president of public policy at the CSC, and a delegation of board members traveled to Washington, D.C. for a series of meetings with federal regulatory leadership and elected officials. These meetings were intended to strengthen communication between growers and congressional offices by having direct in-person conversations regarding key issues that impact the California strawberry industry. The delegation spoke on supporting and advancing automation research, FDA transparency and food safety communications, the proposed Canada plastics regulation's potential impact, immigration reform, and the Federal Farm Bill.

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### **About California Strawberry Commission**

The California Strawberry Commission is more than 400 strawberry farmers, shippers and processors, all working together to advance strawberry farming for the future of our land and people. Commission programs create opportunities for success through groundbreaking programs focused on workforce training, strawberry production research and nutrition research. Through science-based information and education, it delivers the good news about sustainable farming practices that benefit the health of people, farms and communities.