



More Money, More Problems

How the ALRB is spending more but
doing less to help farm workers

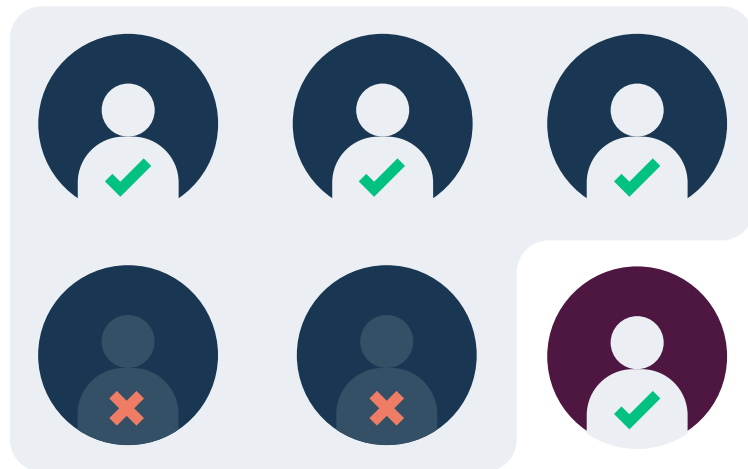


What was the ALRB founded to do?

The California Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) was created in 1975 to oversee the relations between agricultural workers, employers, and labor organizations.

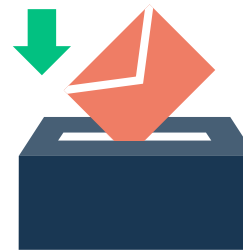


The ALRB breakdown



The ALRB consists of up to 5 board members and a general counsel, all appointed by the governor. **Currently, the ALRB operates with only 3 of the board seats filled.**

THE ALRB'S MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO PROTECT CALIFORNIA FARM WORKERS.



They conduct regional field elections for agricultural workers to determine if they would like to be represented by a labor organization.



They also conduct hearings and issue decisions on unfair labor practice cases.

What is the ALRB doing today?

Over the past decade, the ALRB has become an alarming example of governmental and bureaucratic waste.



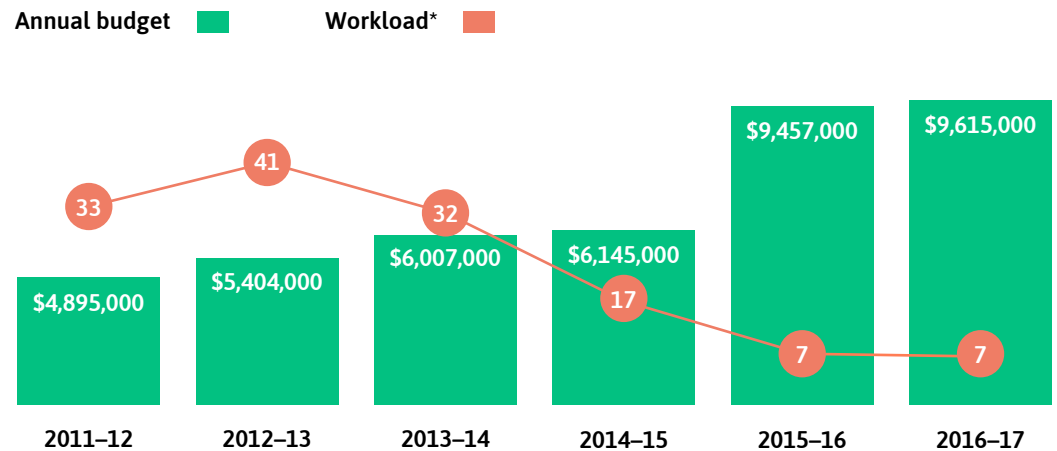
THE ALRB IS DOING HALF THE WORK AT NEARLY DOUBLE THE COST.

Despite a continually increasing budget at the expense of state taxpayers, the ALRB's efforts to protect farm workers have sharply fallen.

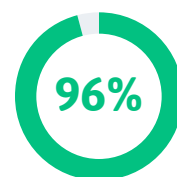


Overspending and underperforming

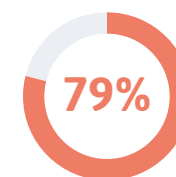
As annual budgets increase, workload continues to fall.^{1,2}



* Workload represents the total number of ALRB board meetings, hearings conducted, and decisions per year.



increase in annual budget from 2011-2017



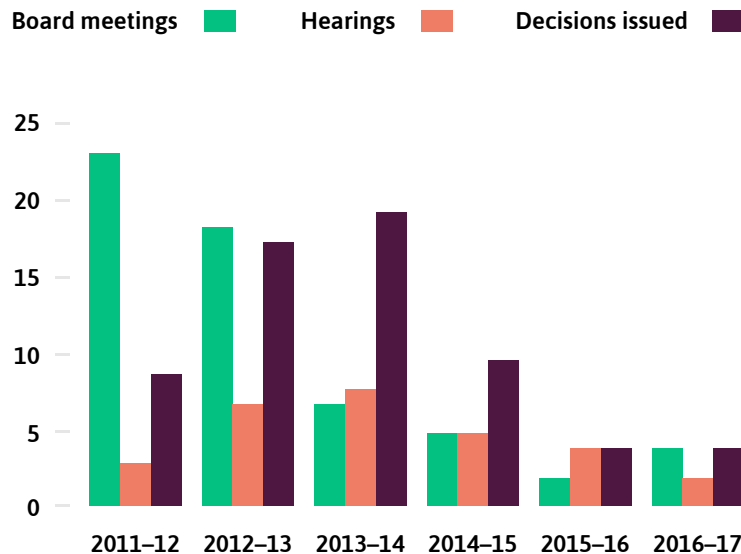
decrease in annual workload from 2011-2017

The ALRB is doing less work today than ever.

Despite an increasing budget, the ALRB has significantly reduced its workload over the past several years.

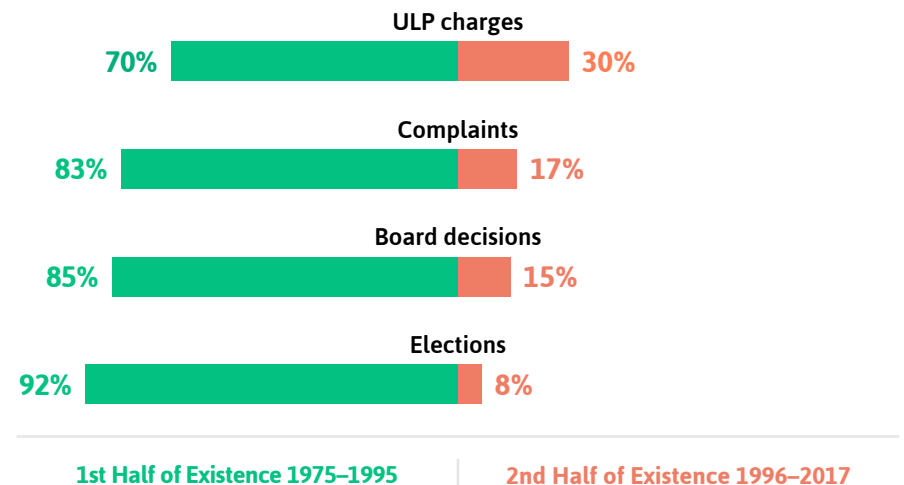


There has been a steep reduction in annual board meetings, hearings, and board decisions.^{2,3}



Then and now

This drop in workload isn't recent. The first 20 years of the ALRB's existence saw significantly higher activity.^{4,5}



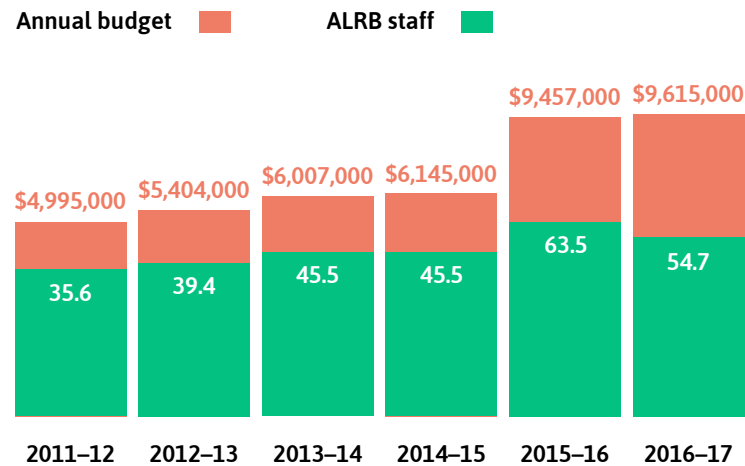
OVERALL, THERE HAS BEEN A 90% DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE (ULP) CHARGES, COMPLAINTS, AND BOARD DECISIONS SINCE THE FIRST HALF OF THE ALRB'S EXISTENCE.

It just doesn't add up.

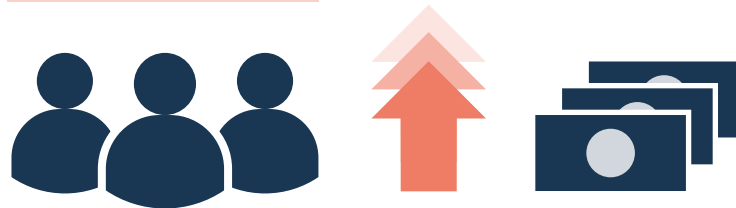
Does less work mean that the ALRB is operating more efficiently? Not quite.



The ALRB's growing budget and staff¹



Since 2011, the ALRB was granted a budget increase of \$4.7 million (+96%) and has added more than 19 staff positions (+53%).



How the ALRB stacks up

How does the ALRB measure up to its national counterpart, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)?

The NLRB's budget-to-workload ratio:⁶



\$160,000/
election



\$13,000/
unfair labor
practice (ULP)

The ALRB's budget-to-workload ratio:¹



\$6,000,000/
election



\$81,000/
ULP

Bottom line

The ALRB costs **38X MORE** to exist than NLRB/election.

The ALRB costs **6X MORE** to exist than NLRB/ULP.

What is the ALRB really up to?

With more resources but less work, the ALRB found other ways to spend its taxpayer-funded time and money.



Between being sued in 2 separate civil rights lawsuits and a prolonged attack on a single grower and its employees, the ALRB has squandered significant portions of its budget over the past several years.

*Aceron v. ALRB*⁷



Discrimination case

Settlement cost: **\$525,000**

Legal cost: **\$137,725**

Total cost: **\$662,725**

*Alvarez v. ALRB*⁸



30-year employee protested the ALRB's refusal to allow her to educate farm workers on their rights to refuse unionization.

Total costs are not yet decided.

*Gerawan Farming Case*⁹



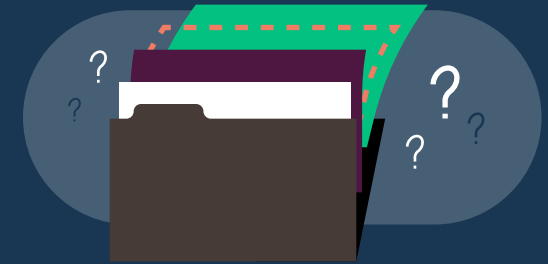
ALRB Gerawan expenses 2012–2017: **\$13,482,000**
(32% of total budget for that period)

Number of votes in union decertification election: **2,600**

ALRB cost to suppress per vote: **\$5,185**

Their behavior and actions have not gone unnoticed.

Events in the past few years have brought outside scrutiny, revealing the ALRB to be ineffective and inefficient in its mandate.



A failed audit¹⁰

In 2014, the ALRB was evaluated by the Department of Finance on their use of resources from 2009–2014 as part of a state audit. The audit revealed the following:

- ▶ “Workload data was **incomplete, unavailable, or inaccurate** for quantifying current resource utilization, as well as limiting the ability to forecast its future resource needs.”
- ▶ **5 weaknesses** that impair ALRB from accomplishing its program goals:
 1. Inability to justify effectiveness of efficiency of resource utilization
 2. Ineffective organizational structure
 3. Misuse of limited-term blanket authority
 4. Inefficient use of state funds
 5. Incomplete and inaccurate accounting records

The resignation of its chairman^{11, 12, 13}

William Gould, who served as the ALRB chairman from 2014–2017, **resigned his post in frustration** of the ineffectiveness of the state bureaucracy. He voiced the following thoughts about the ALRB in his resignation letter:

- ▶ Only 1 petition for unionization was submitted during his 3-year tenure, compared to 604 petitions in 1976. Thus, the ALRB spent more time on petitions from workers trying to kick out the union than on those seeking to join the union. Gould has noted: “More than 99% of the agricultural workforce appears to be unrepresented.”

“IT IS CLEAR THAT UNION ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY IN CALIFORNIA IS MORIBUND.”

– GOULD IN 2016

Commit to action!



From wasting public resources to being out of touch with farm workers, the ALRB is a failing state agency.



California state leaders owe it to farm workers, taxpayers, and the agricultural industry to take a serious look into the ALRB's effectiveness.



Sources

For links to footnote sources, go to <http://www.cafreshfruit.org/agriculture-labor-relations-board-problems>

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