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STATEMENT FOLLOWING DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S DECISION REGARDING BOARD MEMBER MARK ARABO

By 22nd District Agricultural Association Board Chair Sam Nejabat

DEL MAR, Calif. (October 11, 2026) — Following the San Diego County District Attorney's decision not to pursue criminal charges involving 22nd District Agricultural Association Board Member Mark Arabo, 22nd District Agricultural Association Board Chair Sam Nejabat issued the following statement

"I welcome the District Attorney's decision not to pursue criminal charges against my colleague, Mark Arabo.

Throughout his service on the 22nd District Agricultural Association Board, Mark has demonstrated a strong commitment to the Del Mar Fairgrounds, the communities we represent, and the responsibilities entrusted to us as public officials. I have witnessed firsthand his dedication, professionalism, and willingness to make difficult decisions in the public interest.

While allegations of misconduct must always be taken seriously and evaluated through the appropriate processes, the principles of fairness, due process, and the presumption of innocence are equally fundamental. No individual should have their reputation or public service unfairly defined by allegations that have not resulted in criminal charges.

I also believe legitimate questions remain regarding the circumstances surrounding this complaint, including its origins and whether the identity of the purported complainant was independently verified. These questions deserve answers through an appropriate, transparent, and independent review.

If the complaint process was misused, whether through misrepresentation, improper influence, or an attempt to undermine a public official, such conduct must be taken seriously and addressed through the appropriate channels. Protecting the integrity of the investigative process is just as important as ensuring that legitimate complaints are heard and thoroughly evaluated.

entrusted with overseeing significant public assets and making decisions that affect our region's economic and civic future. They must be able to fulfill those responsibilities independently, without fear that unsubstantiated allegations could be used to damage their reputations or interfere with their public duties.

I recognize the personal and professional toll this matter has taken on Mark and his family. I stand firmly behind his right to fair treatment, and I fully support his continued service on our board.

As Chair, my responsibility is to protect the integrity of this institution, uphold the highest standards of public accountability, and ensure that every board member is treated with fairness and respect.

Our commitment to due process must be unwavering, our standards of accountability must be consistent, and our dedication to the public trust must remain above reproach.

Fairness and accountability are not competing principles. They are the foundation of public trust, and we have a responsibility to uphold both.

Mark Arabo, like every individual who chooses to serve the public, deserves nothing less."

Sam Nejabat
Board Chair
22nd District Agricultural Association
Del Mar Fairgrounds

About the 22nd District Agricultural Association

The 22nd District Agricultural Association, which produces the San Diego County Fair, owns and operates the Del Mar Fairgrounds and is governed by a nine-member board appointed by the governor. Fairgrounds operations are primarily funded by revenues generated by hosting events, the largest of which is the annual San Diego County Fair. For more information, visit delmarfairgrounds.com.

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