

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

TUESDAY, 23 JANUARY 2024

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and the Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Opportunities and Tourism on its international study visit to the State of California 15 – 19 May 2023, as follows:

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Mr D America (DA)
Mr P Marran (ANC)
Ms LM Maseko (DA)
Ms CA Murray (DA)
Mr AP van der Westhuizen (Leader of the delegation) (DA)

A member of the GOOD party would have accompanied the delegation but had to return home immediately on arrival due to unforeseen circumstances.

The delegation was accompanied by Ms S Niekerk, Procedural Officer.

1. Introduction and background

The function of the standing committees of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament was primarily to play an oversight role over the respective departments in the province. The committees therefore undertook a study visit to the State of California to observe best practices abroad in the areas of climate change, agriculture, housing and economic

development. Relationship building and the enhancement of capacity and knowledge were also key objectives.

South Africa, and particularly the Western Cape, experienced a series of ongoing droughts, with associated agricultural losses, water restrictions and negative impacts on food and water security. Major hazards because of climate change included increasing temperatures, a changing hydrology and rising sea levels that will lead to higher average temperatures and periods of extreme heat; more frequent and intense droughts; increased risk of floods; more severe wildfires and coastal flooding and erosion.

Representatives of the State of California indicated that they were experiencing similar challenges and that they desired to share experiences. These specific challenges would also influence housing in a variety of ways. Increased housing provision was of foremost importance to address the province's housing challenges. An increased focus on where and how new housing is built was vital to mitigating and adapting to the current and growing impacts of climate change. Climate change and housing were therefore intricately linked to economic development in several ways.

The main motivation for the international study visit was the signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 11 March 2022 to promote the co-operation between the regions that shared similar challenges and climates. It will be effective for five years from the date that it was signed but may be renewed. During the signing ceremony, attended by the Premier, Minister Ivan Meyer and Mr Andricus van der Westhuizen, Ms Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, expressed her eagerness to host a South African delegation.

After deliberation, the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning resolved that, as the final responsibility for agricultural policy resided within the Western Cape Government and the Western Cape Provincial Parliament's domains, it would endeavor to undertake an international study visit to the State of California to improve relationships, to support the implementation of the agreement, to monitor the benefits to be gained, and to identify possible amendments to existing policies.

The objective of the visit was therefore to learn best practices in terms of perceiving and understanding from an agricultural, environmental, housing and economic viewpoint, that which can assist the Western Cape Government in expanding the communication between governmental departments in term of climate change matters; understanding what legislation and policies are currently applied to existing climate change and housing initiatives; and building relations between the State of California (California) and the Province.

California was known as the "Golden State" due to its thriving economy and diverse industries. Two of the key industries that contributed significantly to California's economy were agriculture and tourism. Additionally, the state had made significant advances in the field of alternate energy, which had become increasingly important in recent years due to concerns over climate change and the environment. Agriculture was a significant part of California's economy, generating over US\$50 billion annually. The

state was the leading agricultural producer in the United States, producing more than 400 commodities, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, and dairy products. California's Mediterranean climate, with its long growing season, allowed to produce a wide variety of crops. The State's fertile soil and access to water resources also contributed to its success in the agricultural industry. In addition, California has made significant investments in agricultural technology, which has helped to increase productivity and efficiency.

The tourism industry was another key contributor to California's economy, generating over US\$140 billion annually. The State's natural beauty, diverse attractions, and favorable climate made it a popular destination for tourists from around the world. California was home to several iconic tourist destinations, such as Hollywood, Disneyland, and the Golden Gate Bridge, which drew millions of visitors each year. The tourism industry also provided significant employment opportunities, with more than one million jobs directly or indirectly related to the industry.

In recent years, California has also become a leader in the field of alternate energy. The state had set ambitious targets for renewable energy production, with a goal of producing 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2045. To achieve this goal, California has invested heavily in solar and wind energy, as well as in energy storage technology. The state has also implemented policies to promote the adoption of electric vehicles and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to renewable energy, California also made significant advances in the field of biofuels. The State is home to several companies that produce biofuels from agricultural waste, such as almond shells and grape pomace. These biofuels offered a renewable alternative to traditional fossil fuels and assisted in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Agriculture and tourism were therefore significant contributors to California's economy, while the State's advances in alternate energy offered a promising future for sustainable economic growth.

The delegation visited the city of Sacramento from 15 May to 18 May 2023 and the city of San Francisco on 19 May 2023.

Sacramento was situated in the northern part of California, in the Sacramento Valley region. It was the capital city of California, located about 145km northeast of San Francisco, and home of the California State Senate. San Francisco was in the northern part of California, on the west coast of the United States.

The delegation was welcomed to California by the South African Consul-General to the United State of America, Ms Thandile Babalwa Sunduza, via a Microsoft Teams meeting.

This report outlines the delegation's discussions with key members of state and key officials with a focus on agriculture, environmental matters, housing, and economic development.

For context, an overview of California's Government Structure is provided as understanding the government structure is essential for comprehending the decision-making process, policy formulation, and the functioning of the state's administration.

2. Overview of the State of California's Government Structure

The executive branch of California's government was headed by the Governor, who was elected by the State's residents. The Governor was responsible for overseeing the execution and implementation of laws and policies. The Governor's office consisted of various departments and agencies that managed specific aspects of governance, such as finance, transportation, health, and natural resources.

The legislative branch comprised the California State Legislature, which was bicameral and consisted of two chambers, the Senate, and the Assembly. The Legislature was responsible for making and enacting laws for the State. The Senate had 40 members, and the Assembly had 80 members, each representing different districts within the state. The Legislature's primary functions included proposing and debating legislation, passing the state budget, and conducting oversight of executive agencies.

The judicial branch of California's government was responsible for interpreting and applying the laws. The highest court in the State is the California Supreme Court, which consisted of a Chief Justice and six Associate Justices. The judicial system included various other courts, such as the Court of Appeal and the Superior Courts, which handled a range of civil and criminal cases.

California's local government was structured in a way that provided a system of governance at the county, city, and municipal levels. The State was divided into 58 counties, each with its own board of supervisors responsible for local governance. Cities and municipalities had their own elected officials, such as mayors and city councils, with oversight responsibilities.

California had numerous state agencies and departments that played a crucial role in implementing laws, regulations, and policies. These entities were responsible for managing various aspects of governance, including education, healthcare, transportation, public safety, environmental protection, and agriculture. Examples of important state agencies included the California Department of Education, California Department of Transportation, and California Department of Public Health.

There existed several constitutional officers who were elected by the public and held independent executive powers. These officers included the Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Controller, Treasurer, and Insurance Commissioner. Each officer had specific responsibilities related to their respective positions and provided checks and balances within the government structure.

California's government structure therefore encompassed an executive branch headed by the Governor, a bicameral legislature, a comprehensive judicial system, and a network of local governments. The State's governance was supported by various state agencies, departments, and constitutional offices. This structure ensured a separation of powers, accountability, and a system of checks and balances.

3. Overview and programme in Sacramento, California (15 May – 18 May 2023)

The delegation met with the following representatives and attended the following engagements:

- 3.1 California State Senate – President pro Tempore Senator Toni Atkins
- 3.2 California Legislative Assembly Members – Senators Liz Ortego and Gregg Hart
- 3.3 Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Housing -Senator Scott Wiener
- 3.4 Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture - Senator Melissa Hurtado
- 3.5 Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environmental Quality – Senator Ben Allen
- 3.6 The California Secretary of State – Dr Shirley Weber
- 3.7 The California Department of Food and Agriculture – Secretary Karen Ross and Officials
- 3.8 The University of California (Davis Campus) – Prof Ermias Kebeab, Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Director, World Food Center; Prof Ryan Galt, Professor and Director, Agricultural Sustainability Institute Community and Regional Development; Prof Andre Daccache, Assistant Professor, Biological and Agricultural Engineering; and Dr Mayada Baydas, Global Partnerships Manager, Global Affairs
- 3.9 Visit to Sierra Orchards Farm
- 3.10 Meeting with Mark Stivers, Director of Advocacy, California Housing Partnership
- 3.11 Hearing on the Budget and Fiscal Review on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy

The delegation also attended a dinner that was hosted by the President Pro Tempore at the Leland Stanford Mansion. This mansion was the former residence of Leland Stanford, a prominent businessman, politician, and railroad magnate who served as the Governor of California from 1862 to 1863. The mansion has been declared a State Historic Park. Senators of the State Senate and their sponsors were in attendance.

Details and context of these engagements are listed below.

3.1 California State Senate – President pro Tempore Senator Toni Atkins

- 3.1.1 As mentioned above when the Government Structure of California was outlined, the California State Senate was the upper house of the California State Legislature, which was the legislative branch of the state government of California. It consisted of 40 members, each representing a specific district within the State. Senators were elected to serve four-year terms, with a maximum of two terms. The primary role of the State Senate was to propose, debate, and pass legislation that affected California. Senators introduced bills, participated in committee hearings to review and amend proposed legislation, and voted on bills before they could be sent to the California State Assembly for further consideration. Each State Senator represented a specific district within the state, which encompassed approximately one million residents. Senators were elected by the constituents of their districts to be their voice in the state legislature. They were expected to understand and address the needs and concerns of their constituents.

- 3.1.2 The Senate conducted much of its work through committees. There were various policy committees, each focusing on specific subject areas such as finance, judiciary, transportation, education, and health. These committees reviewed bills, held public hearings, and made recommendations on legislation to the full Senate.
- 3.1.3 The Senate was led by the President pro Tempore, who was elected by the members of the Senate. The President pro Tempore, along with other leadership positions such as the Majority Leader and committee chairs, played a crucial role in setting the legislative agenda, assigning bills to committees, and ensuring the smooth functioning of the Senate. The State Senate had the authority to confirm appointments made by the Governor to various high-level positions, such as agency heads, judges, and members of boards and commissions. Senate confirmation hearings provided an opportunity for senators to evaluate the qualifications and suitability of the appointees.
- 3.1.4 Along with the California State Assembly, the Senate reviewed and approved the state budget proposed by the Governor. Senators participated in budget hearings, made decisions on funding allocations, and worked to ensure that the state budget aligned with the priorities and needs of California. The Senate exercised oversight functions by holding hearings, conducting investigations, and evaluating the operations of state agencies. This included monitoring the implementation of laws, addressing issues of public interest, and ensuring transparency and accountability in the state government.
- 3.1.5 The meeting with the President pro Tempore proved insightful and relationships were forged that will contribute to collaboration and improved relations between the Western Cape and California. The discussion centred around climate change matters pertaining to atmospheric rivers, water catchment areas, above ground water storage, environmental awareness, desalination plants, recycled water, and agricultural visas. Details are provided below:
- 3.1.5.1 Atmospheric rivers were long, narrow bands of enhanced moisture in the earth's atmosphere. California relied heavily on atmospheric rivers for a significant portion of its annual precipitation. They played a crucial role in replenishing water supplies, particularly for reservoirs and snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Atmospheric rivers were most common in California during the winter months, typically from October to April. While atmospheric rivers brought much-needed precipitation to California, they also resulted in significant impacts. Intense atmospheric river events lead to heavy rainfall, flooding, landslides, and even mudslides. These events caused infrastructure damage, disrupted transportation, and posed risks to public safety. Atmospheric rivers were crucial for alleviating drought conditions in California. However, climate change may influence their frequency and intensity, leading to potential shifts in precipitation patterns.
- 3.1.5.2 Water catchment areas, also known as watersheds or drainage basins, played a vital role in California's water supply. They were the areas of land where all the water that fell as rain or snow collected and drained into a common outlet, such as a river, lake, or reservoir. California had several significant water catchment areas that contributed to the State's water resources. These water catchment areas were essential for California's water management and supply. They provided water for drinking, agriculture, hydropower generation, and ecological balance. Protecting and managing these watersheds was crucial for ensuring sustainable water resources and mitigating the

impacts of droughts, floods, and other water-related challenges. State and local agencies, as well as various stakeholders, worked together to monitor, conserve, and manage these valuable water catchment areas in California.

3.1.5.3 Above-ground storage of water, particularly in the form of reservoirs, had been a contentious issue in California due to a variety of factors for the following reasons:

3.1.5.3.1 Environmental Concerns - Building large reservoirs for water storage often involved significant alterations to the natural landscape, including damming rivers and flooding valleys. These projects could impact ecosystems, disrupt wildlife habitats, and affect the natural flow of rivers. Environmentalists and conservationists often opposed such projects due to concerns related to biodiversity loss, altered ecosystems, and the potential negative impacts on endangered species.

3.1.5.3.2 Land Use and Property Rights - Constructing above-ground storage facilities often required acquiring land, which could involve conflict over property rights and land use. Communities may resist the acquisition of their land for reservoirs, especially if it displaces residents, affects agricultural operations, or disrupts cultural sites. These disputes could lead to legal battles and public opposition to the projects.

3.1.5.3.3 Cost and Funding - Building and maintaining large reservoirs was a costly endeavour. The expenses associated with constructing, operating, and maintaining reservoirs were substantial, and taxpayers often carried the burden. Contentious debates then arose over the allocation of funds for reservoir projects, with some arguing that the costs outweigh the benefits or that the money should be invested in alternative water management strategies.

3.1.5.3.4 Indigenous and Tribal Rights - Some reservoir projects in California have faced opposition from indigenous communities and tribal groups due to concerns about the impact on sacred sites, cultural resources, and traditional lands. Reservoirs could disrupt ancestral territories and compromise the access and availability of water for tribal communities.

While above-ground storage could be contentious, it was considered an essential component of California's water infrastructure. Reservoirs provided water storage for drinking, irrigation, and flood control purposes, and they played a crucial role in managing the State's water resources. Balancing the need for water storage with environmental, social, and economic considerations remained a complex challenge in California's water management decisions.

3.1.5.4 Desalination was the process of removing salt and other impurities from seawater or brackish water to produce freshwater suitable for various uses. Given California's water challenges, including drought conditions and growing water demands, desalination became a vital component of the state's water supply diversification efforts. Desalination was a complex process that required careful consideration of environmental impacts. The intake and discharge of seawater during desalination could potentially affect marine ecosystems. Steps were taken to minimise the environmental impact of desalination plants, such as the use of subsurface intake systems to reduce harm to marine life and treating the discharge water to ensure it complied with regulatory standards.

Desalination was an energy-intensive process, and the associated energy costs were a significant consideration. While technological advancements had improved energy efficiency in desalination, it remained an expensive water supply option compared to other traditional sources. California continued to explore and evaluate desalination as a potential water supply option. The State recognised desalination as one of the tools to enhance water supply reliability. However, the development of new desalination plants involved careful assessment of factors such as cost-effectiveness, environmental impact, brine management, and local water needs. Desalination was not the sole solution to California's water challenges. The State emphasised a comprehensive approach to water management, including conservation, water recycling, groundwater management, and improving overall water use efficiency. Desalination was viewed as one component of a diverse water portfolio to enhance water supply resilience in specific regions with suitable conditions and needs.

- 3.1.5.5 California viewed recycled water as a valuable resource in addressing its water challenges. Recycled water referred to treated wastewater that underwent advanced treatment processes to remove impurities, making it suitable for various non-potable uses. Recycled water played a crucial role in California's water conservation efforts. By utilising recycled water for non-potable purposes such as landscape irrigation, agricultural irrigation, industrial processes, and groundwater recharge, California has reduced its reliance on freshwater sources and preserved more potable water for essential uses. Recycled water has assisted California to become more resilient during periods of drought. During dry spells when traditional water supplies may be limited, recycled water has provided a reliable alternative for non-drinking water needs. It helped to ensure a more sustainable and diverse water supply portfolio for communities, businesses, and agriculture.

Regulations and guidelines have been established to ensure the safety and quality of recycled water. The California State Water Resources Control Board controlled the permitting, treatment standards, and monitoring of recycled water projects to safeguard public health and environmental protection. Public perception and acceptance of recycled water has evolved in California over the years. Initially, there were concerns about the safety and aesthetics of using recycled water. However, through public education, effective communication, and demonstrating the success of existing projects, attitudes toward recycled water have become more favourable. Many Californians have recognised its value in addressing water scarcity and supporting sustainable water management.

The State supported and encouraged the use of recycled water. Direct potable reuse (treating recycled water to drinking water standards) was in the process of being researched and explored, but it was subject to stringent regulations and extensive public acceptance processes.

- 3.1.5.6 California relied heavily on foreign labour to meet the labour demands of its agricultural industry. To address this need, the state participated in various federal programmes that facilitated the issuance of agricultural visas, also known as H-2A visas. The H-2A Visa Programme was administered by the United States Department of Labour and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. It allowed employers in the agricultural sector to hire foreign workers on a temporary basis to perform seasonal or temporary agricultural work.

The H-2A Visa Programme was designed to address the labour needs of agricultural employers when there was a shortage of available United States workers. It enabled employers to bring in foreign workers to fill temporary positions such as crop harvesting, planting, pruning, irrigation, and other farm-related activities. To participate in the H-2A Visa Programme, agricultural employers had to demonstrate that there was a shortage of available United States workers for the specific job positions. They were required to provide suitable wages, transportation, and housing for the H-2A workers, following the regulations that were set by the United States Department of Labour and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The H-2A Visa Programme included certain labour protections for foreign agricultural workers. Employers were required to provide workers with the same wages, benefits, and working conditions as those offered to domestic workers in similar positions. Workers were also entitled to certain protection under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act. The Programme was primarily designed for seasonal agricultural work, which meant that the employment duration was limited to the specific period when the work was necessary. The length of the visa was determined by the employer's certified temporary labour need, typically not exceeding one year.

California, being a major agricultural state, had specific agencies and programmes in place that supported agricultural employers with the H-2A Visa Programme. The California Employment Development Department provided guidance and assistance to employers, including the processing of job orders and the verification of the availability of United States workers.

- 3.1.6 After the meeting with the President pro Tempore, the delegation observed a Senate Sitting and was introduced on the Senate Floor. This was followed by a VIP tour of the California State Capitol. Apparent to the delegation was the easy access that members of the public had to the State Capitol and the number of tour groups that were present.

3.2 The California Legislative Assembly Members – Senators Liz Ortego and Gregg Hart

This meeting was a very short introductory meeting, and its purpose was to extend a welcome to the delegation on behalf of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Pertinent topics that were briefly discussed were the promotion of public participation, representativity in Parliament and the allocation of budgets.

3.3 Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Housing -Senator Scott Wiener

3.3.1 The Housing Situation in California

- 3.3.1.1 The housing situation in California was characterised by various challenges that included high housing costs, limited supply, and affordability issues. California consistently ranked among the most expensive states for housing in the United States. The demand for housing, driven by population growth, job opportunities, and desirability, often outpaced the available supply, leading to high home prices and rental

rates. This posed affordability challenges for many residents, particularly low- and middle-income households.

3.3.1.2 California experienced a shortage of housing supply, particularly affordable housing. The rate of new housing construction had not kept up with demand, contributing to the housing affordability crisis. Factors such as restrictive land use regulations, zoning restrictions, lengthy approval processes, and construction costs have hindered the development of new housing units. The high housing costs in California have resulted in significant affordability challenges for many residents. A large portion of households, including renters and potential homebuyers, faced a high-cost burden, spending a significant portion of their income on housing. This has led to concerns relating to housing insecurity, homelessness, and difficulties in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

3.3.1.3 Homelessness was a significant issue, as California had a large homeless population. The lack of affordable housing options, combined with other factors such as income inequality, mental health issues, and substance abuse, contributed to the homelessness crisis.

Homeless people were seen by the delegation on the streets of Sacramento and San Francisco. There were several factors that contributed to the higher prevalence of mental health issues among the homeless population. Homelessness was often the result of economic hardship, which included poverty, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, and inadequate access to social support systems. These economic stressors contributed to increased rates of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Many homeless individuals experienced significant trauma or adverse life experiences, including physical or sexual abuse, violence, loss of family or social support networks, or other traumatic events. These experiences led to the development of mental health disorders or exacerbated existing conditions. Substance abuse was a common coping mechanism among homeless individuals, as they turned to drugs or alcohol as a means of self-medication or escaping from their difficult circumstances. Many homeless individuals had both a mental health disorder and a substance abuse disorder. The lack of stable housing, exposure to violence or unsafe environments, social isolation, and constant survival challenges contributed to increased psychological distress.

Housing challenges in California were not uniform across the State, with regional variations in supply, demand, and affordability. Coastal areas, including major cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles, tend to have faced more acute housing issues compared to some inland regions. However, housing affordability concerns were widespread throughout the State.

Efforts were ongoing to address the housing situation in California, with a focus on increasing housing supply, promoting affordable housing options, and addressing regulatory barriers. The complex nature of the housing crisis required a multi-faceted approach involving public and private sector collaboration, policy reforms, and community engagement to make housing more accessible and affordable for all residents.

3.3.2 The Effect of Climate Change on Housing

Climate change has led to population displacement, with people moving away from areas prone to natural disasters. California's relatively mild climate and coastal location made it an attractive destination for those seeking refuge from regions affected by extreme weather events. This increased demand for housing resulted in pressure on the already strained housing market, driving up prices and exacerbating affordability issues.

The impact of climate change on California's housing market extended beyond increased demand. Areas at higher risk of wildfires, sea-level rise, or other climate-related hazards experienced decreased property values, increased insurance costs, and difficulty in securing mortgages. This volatility has led to market instability, impacting homeowners, investors, and the broader economy. Addressing climate change required sustainable urban planning and development practices. Promoting energy-efficient buildings, incentivising renewable energy adoption, and integrating green spaces into urban areas were crucial for mitigating the effects of climate change. These initiatives not only contributed to environmental sustainability but also created jobs and stimulated economic growth in industries such as renewable energy, construction, and green technology.

The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has driven the growth of the green building sector in California. The state has implemented stringent energy efficiency standards, such as the CAL Green building code, which required new constructions to meet specific sustainability criteria. This has spurred the demand for energy-efficient building materials, technologies, and skilled labour, creating new business opportunities and employment prospects. Climate change challenges necessitated innovative solutions. California became a hub for research institutions, startups, and companies focused on developing clean technologies and sustainable solutions. This fostered entrepreneurship, attracted investment, and supported the growth of a green economy, generating economic opportunities and driving overall development.

3.4 Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture - Senator Melissa Hurtado

3.4.1 The California Senate Committee on Agriculture focused on various issues related to agriculture within the State. The specific areas of focus varied depending on legislative priorities and the needs of the agricultural industry. The Committee played a crucial role in reviewing, developing, and advancing agricultural policies and legislation. This included proposing and evaluating bills related to farming practices, water management, labour regulations, land use, food safety, and other areas affecting the agricultural sector.

3.4.2 It became apparent during the discussion that there was a distinctive disconnect between urban and rural communities in California that stemmed from several factors, including economic, social, and political differences. Urban and rural areas in California had distinct economic profiles. Urban regions, such as the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, were hubs of economic activity, with diverse industries, more job opportunities, and higher average incomes. In contrast, rural areas relied heavily on specific industries like agriculture, which was subject to fluctuations and had lower average incomes. This economic disparity resulted in differing levels of infrastructure development, access to services, and employment opportunities.

Allocation of resources, including funding and public investments, sometimes favoured urban areas over rural communities. Urban regions tended to have larger populations and more concentrated political influence, which often resulted in a disproportionate

allocation of resources for infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other services. This disparity in resource allocation contributed to the disconnect between urban and rural communities.

3.4.3 A challenge faced in California, like that in South Africa, was stimulating interest in young people for the science of Agriculture. There were several potential reasons why young people found it difficult to develop an interest in agriculture. These included:

3.4.3.1 Perception and stereotypes - Agriculture was sometimes associated with traditional and labour-intensive practices, which may be seen as less appealing or outdated by younger generations. There were also stereotypes about the industry being monotonous, physically demanding, and offering limited opportunities for innovation and technological advancements.

3.4.3.2 Lack of awareness and exposure - Many young people may have had limited exposure to agriculture and may not fully understand the diverse and evolving nature of the industry. The disconnect between urban and rural communities contributed to a lack of awareness about the importance and opportunities within agriculture.

3.4.3.3 Education and career guidance - The educational curriculum and career guidance often prioritised non-agricultural fields, leading to limited exposure to agricultural career paths. This resulted in a lack of understanding about the range of opportunities available in modern agriculture, including agri-business, precision farming, sustainable practices, research, and technology-driven solutions.

3.4.3.4 Economic factors - The financial risks and uncertainties associated with agriculture could discourage young people from pursuing careers in the field. Fluctuating commodity prices, climate-related challenges, and the initial capital investment required for farming could create barriers to entry, especially for those without a family background in agriculture.

3.4.3.5 Lifestyle and work-life balance - Agriculture often involved long hours, seasonal demands, and physical labour, which may not align with the work-life balance expectations of some young people. The perception of a demanding lifestyle can discourage them from considering agriculture as a career choice.

3.4.3.6 Limited networking and mentoring opportunities - The lack of networking and mentorship opportunities in the agriculture sector could make it challenging for young people to connect with experienced professionals and gain insights into the industry. Without access to supportive networks, it could be difficult to navigate the complexities of starting a career in agriculture.

3.5 Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environmental Quality – Senator Ben Allen

3.5.1 The California Senate Committee on Environmental Quality focused on a range of issues related to environmental protection, sustainability, and the impact of human activities on the environment. The Committee played a significant role in shaping environmental policies and legislation in the state. Some of the key areas of focus for the Committee included Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Air and Water Quality;

Environmental Justice; Land Use and Conservation; Hazardous Materials and Waste Management; Environmental Impact Assessments; Natural Resources and Renewable Energy.

3.5.2 A pertinent discussion point was the transition to electricity generation from renewable sources. The reasons for this transitioning were as follows:

3.5.2.1 Climate change mitigation - Electricity generation from fossil fuels, such as coal and natural gas, were a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, which were the primary drivers of climate change. Transitioning to renewable energy sources helped reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, thus mitigating climate change and its associated impacts, such as rising global temperatures, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events.

3.5.2.2 Air quality improvement - Burning fossil fuels for electricity generation released pollutants and harmful emissions into the air, leading to poor air quality and adverse health effects for humans and ecosystems. Renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydroelectric power, produced electricity without emitting pollutants, thereby improving air quality and public health.

3.5.2.3 Resource conservation - Renewable energy sources were virtually limitless, unlike fossil fuels, which were finite and non-renewable. By harnessing renewable sources, dependence on fossil fuels can be reduced, finite resources could be preserved, and long-term energy sustainability could be ensured.

3.5.2.4 Energy independence and security - Relying on renewable energy sources enhanced energy independence and security. Unlike fossil fuels, which often needed to be imported, renewable energy sources could be domestically produced, reducing reliance on foreign energy imports and the geopolitical challenges associated with it.

3.5.2.5 Economic opportunities - The transition to renewable energy created economic opportunities and jobs in the renewable energy sector. Investments in renewable energy infrastructure, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance could stimulate economic growth, promote innovation, and generate employment in local communities.

3.5.2.6 Technological advancements - The shift towards renewable energy sources stimulated technological advancements and innovations in energy storage, grid management, and clean energy technologies. This fostered research and development, leading to the emergence of more efficient, affordable, and scalable renewable energy solutions.

3.5.2.7 Environmental stewardship - Using renewable energy aligned with the principles of environmental stewardship and sustainability. By reduced reliance on fossil fuels, habitat destruction could be minimised, biodiversity protected, ecosystems preserved,

and the environmental footprint associated with resource extraction and transportation could be reduced.

- 3.5.3 California had a policy in place that banned the construction of nuclear power plants until a safe and permanent solution for the disposal of high-level nuclear waste was established. The State was primarily focused on renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydroelectric power to meet its electricity needs and achieve its clean energy goals.
- 3.5.4 California achieved significant milestones in renewable energy generation. It set a record by powering 100% of its electricity demand with renewable energy sources for a single day. This accomplishment was a significant step toward the State's goal of achieving 100% clean energy by 2045. During that day, a combination of solar, wind, geothermal, and hydroelectric power supplied most California's electricity needs. The availability of abundant sunlight, strong winds, and favourable geography contributed to the State's capacity for renewable energy generation.

Although achieving such high levels of renewable energy on a single day was a notable achievement, it does not represent the State's average energy mix. California's overall electricity generation still relied on a combination of renewable sources, natural gas, and other conventional sources. Nonetheless, this milestone demonstrated California's commitment to transitioning to a cleaner and more sustainable energy future, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and leading the way in renewable energy deployment. The State continued investing in renewable energy infrastructure, supporting research and development, and implementing policies to accelerate the transition to clean energy sources.

- 3.5.5 Battery storage also played a crucial role in California's energy landscape as the State tried to increase the integration of renewable energy sources and enhance grid reliability. California became the first state to establish an energy storage mandate. The California Public Utilities Commission issued a ruling that required the State's three largest investor-owned utilities to procure a specified amount of energy storage capacity by 2024. This mandate has spurred the deployment of battery storage systems throughout the State.

Battery storage systems helped to address the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources like solar and wind. They stored excess electricity generated during times of high production and released it when demand was high or when renewable generation was low. This enhanced grid stability, reduced the need for fossil fuel-based backup power plants, and allowed for higher levels of renewable energy penetration. Battery storage enhanced grid reliability by providing fast-response capabilities to balance supply and demand fluctuations. During times of peak demand or unexpected outages, battery storage systems quickly delivered stored electricity to stabilise the grid, prevented blackouts, and supported critical infrastructure.

California has been at the forefront of battery storage innovations and investments. The State provided various incentives, grants, and funding programmes to support the deployment of energy storage systems, research and development, and manufacturing. These initiatives contributed to the growth and advancement of battery storage technologies.

- 3.5.6 California has passed significant legislation to support and promote the adoption of electric vehicles (EV's) and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.

The delegation was also informed that it was possible for a car to function as a battery to charge a house under certain conditions. This concept was known as vehicle-to-home (V2H) or vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technology. EV's typically had a built-in battery pack that stored electricity to power the vehicle. With V2H or V2G technology, EVs were equipped with bi-directional charging capabilities, allowing them to not only receive electricity from the grid but also supply electricity back to the grid or other electrical loads, such as a house.

When an EV is connected to a house through an appropriate charging infrastructure, the energy stored in the EV's battery could be discharged and used to power the house. This could be particularly useful during power outages or in situations where the EV is parked and not in use for an extended period. To enable a car to charge a house effectively, a power management system was required. This system monitored the energy needs of the house, the state of charge of the car's battery, and grid conditions. It ensured that the car's battery was discharged at an appropriate rate to meet the house's energy demands without depleting the car's battery excessively. V2H or V2G technology required compatible charging infrastructure and vehicle communication protocols. Additionally, coordination with the electrical grid and appropriate regulations and standards were necessary to ensure safe and efficient power transfer.

While V2H or V2G technology was still relatively new and its widespread adoption was limited, it held incentive for the creation of more flexible and resilient energy systems, optimisation of energy use, and potentially reduction costs for EV owners. Ongoing research and development efforts are focused on refining the technology and addressing various technical, regulatory, and market challenges associated with implementing V2H or V2G systems.

3.6 The California Secretary of State – Dr Shirley Weber

- 3.6.1 The California Secretary of State was a crucial position within the state government responsible for overseeing various administrative and electoral functions. The California Secretary of State served as the chief elections officer, business regulator, and custodian of official records for the State. The Secretary of State played a pivotal role in overseeing elections in California, ensuring the integrity of the electoral process, and promoting voter participation. The office managed voter registration, candidate filings, and certified election results. The Secretary of State's office was responsible for registering and regulating businesses operating in California. It maintained business filings, including corporate records, trademarks, and uniform commercial code filings. The office promoted a business-friendly environment and provided resources to support entrepreneurship and economic development. The Secretary of State administered and enforced California's campaign finance and lobbying disclosure laws. This included the regulation of political fundraising, tracking campaign contributions and expenditures, and ensuring transparency in the political process. It also provided authentication services for official documents. The Secretary of State served as the custodian of official state records, including legislative acts, regulations, and historical documents. The office-maintained archives and provided public access to these records.

- 3.6.2 The California Secretary of State's office has been actively engaged in several notable initiatives to enhance its services and promote public participation in the political election process. The office focused on modernising California's voting systems, including the implementation of the Voter's Choice Act, which expanded access to early voting, vote-by-mail options, and redesigned polling places. A special focus was placed on getting young people, who were eligible to vote, to exercise this right. Campaigns to this end were targeted at university students.
- 3.6.3 Efforts have also been made to strengthen campaign finance disclosure and enforcement, thereby ensuring transparency in political fundraising and spending. The office provided accessible online platforms for reporting and accessing campaign finance data. The Secretary of State's office has introduced online filing systems and streamlined processes to improve the efficiency of business registration and compliance services, making it easier for entrepreneurs and business owners to start and operate their ventures. Recognising the diverse population of California, the office has taken steps to provide multilingual services, including voter information and resources, to ensure equal access and participation for all eligible voters.
- 3.6.4 The California Secretary of State played a pivotal role in ensuring the integrity of elections, supporting businesses, preserving official records, and promoting transparency in campaign finance. The office's initiatives in modernising voting systems, enhancing business services, and promoting public engagement have contributed to a more accessible and efficient governance process in California. By continuing to prioritise innovation, transparency, and accessibility, the California Secretary of State's office can further strengthen its impact and contribute to the democratic fabric of the state.

3.7 California Department of Food and Agriculture

- 3.7.1 On 15 August 2019 the California State Secretary of Food and Agriculture, Ms Karen Ross, visited the Western Cape Province. The delegation included agricultural businesspeople from California, officials from the United States Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture, as well as the United States Consulate in Cape Town. During the visit the topic of discussion centered on droughts, floods, and Climate Change Adaptation.

During the visit, Secretary Ross raised intent to enter into a formal agreement with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture. This intent can be traced back to the fact that California and the Western Cape are two of the very few regions of the world sharing similar (Mediterranean) climates. It was argued that, due to the similarities in climate, the sharing of knowledge and experience will be to the benefit of both parties.

The key components of the agreement included an exchange of information on climate change mitigation and best practices within the agricultural sector, connecting academic institutions to further research and collaboration on water-use efficiency in the agricultural sector, and to further the use and availability of climate smart agricultural technology and on-farm practices to improve soil health, water-use efficiency, and modelling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The MoU was signed in February 2022.

The MoU designated the Office of Business Planning and Strategy of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation at

the California Department of Food and Agriculture to devise an action plan that implemented the objectives of the MoU. Towards the end of September 2022 Minister Meyer, accompanied by a small delegation, visited California as a further step to cement the MoU.

- 3.7.2 The farming and food production Sector in California was responsible for 2,8 million jobs. In addition, it generated more than US\$370 billion in direct economic output. Furthermore, farmers in California were responsible for 20% of the total food supply of the United State of America as well as more than 60% of all fruit, vegetables and tree nuts consumed in the country.
- 3.7.3 The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) focused on several key areas related to the agriculture industry and food safety within the state. The specific areas of focus included:
- 3.7.3.1 Agricultural regulations - The CDFA was responsible for developing and implementing regulations and standards that govern various aspects of agriculture in California. These included regulations related to pest management, organic farming, animal health and welfare, food safety, and environmental stewardship.
- 3.7.3.2 Pest and disease prevention – The CDFA played a crucial role in protecting California's agriculture from pests, diseases, and invasive species. It conducted surveillance, monitoring, and eradication efforts to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful pests that could damage crops, forests, and ecosystems. The CDFA also implemented quarantine programs to control the movement of pests and diseases within the state.
- 3.7.3.3 Food safety and inspection - The CDFA ensured the safety and quality of food produced and sold in California. It operated inspection programmes for food processing facilities, dairy products, eggs, and meat products to ensure compliance with state and federal food safety regulations. The CDFA also promoted good agricultural practices to minimise foodborne illnesses and contamination risks.
- 3.7.3.4 Market access and export promotion - The CDFA supported California farmers, ranchers, and food processors in accessing domestic and international markets. It assisted in promoting California-grown agricultural products, certified products for export, and collaborated with trade partners to address trade barriers and expand market opportunities.
- 3.7.3.5 Environmental stewardship - The CDFA recognised the importance of sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation. It promoted practices that conserved water, protected soil health, managed waste, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and preserved biodiversity. The CDFA provided resources, incentives, and technical assistance to support farmers and ranchers in adopting sustainable practices.
- 3.7.3.6 Research and education - The CDFA supported agricultural research, innovation, and educational programs. It collaborated with universities, research institutions, and industry stakeholders to address agricultural challenges, develop new technologies, and enhance agricultural productivity, sustainability, and resilience.
- 3.7.3.7 Farmer Assistance and Grants - The CDFA administered various financial assistance programmes and grants to support California farmers, ranchers, and agricultural

businesses. These programmes aimed to improve competitiveness, address industry challenges, fund research projects, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship within the agriculture sector.

3.7.3.8 Regulatory compliance - The CDFA assisted farmers to navigate and comply with regulations related to agriculture, food safety, and environmental stewardship. It provided guidance on state and federal laws, permits, certifications, and best practices to ensure that farmers met regulatory requirements.

3.7.4 The CDFA has implemented several climate-smart agricultural practices to promote sustainable farming methods and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Key practices adopted by the CDFA included:

3.7.4.1 Soil health management - The CDFA promoted soil health practices such as cover cropping, composting, and reduced tillage. These practices improved soil organic matter, enhanced soil structure, increased water-holding capacity, and promoted carbon sequestration in agricultural soils. Healthy soils helped to increase resilience to drought, reduced erosion, and enhanced nutrient cycling.

3.7.4.2 Water use efficiency - The CDFA supported the adoption of water-efficient irrigation techniques and technologies. This included the use of drip irrigation, precision irrigation systems, soil moisture monitoring, and irrigation scheduling based on crop needs. These practices helped to conserve water resources, to reduce water waste, and to improve crop water-use efficiency.

3.7.4.3 Renewable energy integration - The CDFA encouraged farmers to adopt renewable energy systems such as solar panels and wind turbines to power their operations. By generating clean energy on-site, farmers reduced their reliance on fossil fuels, lowered greenhouse gas emissions, and potentially generated additional income through energy production.

3.7.4.4 Methane emission reduction - The CDFA promoted the implementation of dairy digesters and alternative manure management practices in livestock operations. Dairy digesters captured methane emissions from cow manure and converted it into renewable energy, while alternative manure management practices such as solid separation and composting helped reduce methane emissions from livestock operations.

3.7.4.5 Sustainable pest management - The CDFA supported the use of integrated pest management practices that focussed on reducing chemical pesticide use and promoting alternative pest control methods. These strategies included the use of biological controls, crop rotation, habitat restoration for natural predators, and monitoring techniques to target specific pests while minimising environmental impacts.

3.7.4.6 Climate adaptation planning - The CDFA assisted farmers in developing climate adaptation plans to identify and address climate-related risks and vulnerabilities. This included providing resources and information on climate-smart farming practices, risk assessment tools, and access to funding opportunities for implementing climate adaptation strategies.

These climate-smart agricultural practices not only contributed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions but also enhanced the resilience of California's agricultural sector in the face of climate change. The CDFA collaborated with farmers, researchers, industry stakeholders, and other agencies to promote and support the adoption of these practices throughout the state.

3.8 University of California, Davis Campus (UC Davis)

3.8.1 The delegation met with experts in the field of environmental and agricultural sciences to understand the partnership between UC Davis and the CDFA. It was apparent that this partnership fostered innovation, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based decision-making, contributing to the advancement of California's agriculture sector and the protection of public health and environmental resources.

3.8.2 UC Davis was a public research university located in Davis, California. Established in 1905, it has grown to become one of the top public universities in the United States, known for its strength in agriculture, veterinary medicine, and environmental science.

3.8.3 The university had one of the largest and most diverse agricultural research programmes in the world, with more than 200 faculty members and researchers working on everything from plant biology and genetics to animal science and agricultural economics. In addition to its research, UC Davis was also home to the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, which offered a range of undergraduate and graduate programmes in subjects such as animal science, environmental policy, and food science.

3.8.4 UC Davis played a significant role in assisting the CDFA, through various collaborative initiatives, research partnerships, and educational programmes in the following ways:

3.8.4.1 Research and innovation - UC Davis conducted extensive research on various aspects of agriculture, food production, and environmental sustainability. This research often informed and supported the work of the CDFA in developing policies, regulations, and programmes related to agriculture, food safety, pest management, and environmental stewardship.

3.8.4.2 Co-operative extension - UC Davis operated a Cooperative Extension Programme that connected farmers, agricultural professionals, and communities with research-based information and expertise. Cooperative Extension advisors, based in counties throughout California, provided valuable assistance to the CDFA by disseminating research findings, conducting outreach and education, and addressing issues faced by the agricultural community.

3.8.4.3 Diagnostic laboratories - UC Davis operated diagnostic laboratories that assisted the CDFA in identifying and addressing plant and animal diseases, pests, and other agricultural issues. These laboratories provided testing services, research support, and expert analysis to aid the CDFA in managing and mitigating agricultural threats and ensuring food safety.

3.8.4.4 Policy development and analysis - UC Davis faculty and researchers often contributed to the development and analysis of agricultural policies and regulations. Their expertise and research findings were valuable in shaping effective policies and strategies that

promoted sustainable agriculture, protected public health, and addressed emerging challenges faced by the CDFA.

3.8.4.5 Education and training - UC Davis offered educational programs and training opportunities that prepared students and professionals for careers in agriculture, food science, and related fields. Graduates from UC Davis contributed to the agricultural

workforce and could bring their expertise and knowledge to the CDFA, supporting its mission and initiatives.

3.8.4.6 Collaboration and partnerships - UC Davis collaborated closely with the CDFA and other agricultural organisations to address common challenges and to achieve shared goals. This collaboration included joint research projects, sharing of data and information, and participation in task forces or advisory committees to improve agricultural practices, enhance food safety, and promote sustainable agriculture.

3.8.5 The Global Affairs office, situated at UC Davis, served as a central hub for coordinating and advancing the university's global engagement efforts. The relationship between Global Affairs and UC Davis was focused on fostering global collaborations, promoting international education, facilitating research partnerships, and addressing global challenges. Key aspects of the relationship were as follows:

3.8.5.1 International partnerships - Global Affairs at UC Davis cultivated and managed strategic partnerships with universities, research institutions, and organisations worldwide. These partnerships enabled collaborative research, student and faculty exchanges, joint degree programmes, and knowledge sharing across borders.

3.8.5.2 Study abroad and international education - Global Affairs supported UC Davis students in their pursuit of international experiences through study abroad programmes, internships, and global learning opportunities importance. It facilitated student mobility, cross-cultural understanding, and the development of global competencies.

3.8.5.3 Research and scholarly collaboration - Global Affairs played a vital role in facilitating international research collaborations and fostering connections between UC Davis researchers and their global counterparts. It supported faculty engagement in global research initiatives, interdisciplinary collaborations, and the pursuit of grants and funding for international projects.

3.8.5.4 Global Professional Programmes - Global Affairs coordinated professional programmes that addressed global challenges and provided training and capacity-building opportunities for professionals from around the world. These programmes leveraged the expertise of UC Davis faculty and professionals to address pressing global issues and promote sustainable development.

3.8.5.5 Policy engagement and advocacy - Global Affairs engaged in policy discussions and advocacy efforts at local, national, and international levels to promote global cooperation, to highlight international education and research, and to address global challenges such as food security, climate change, and public health.

3.8.5.6 Global learning and outreach - Global Affairs supported initiatives to integrate global perspectives and knowledge into the curriculum and campus culture. It organised events, lectures, and workshops that promoted global understanding, intercultural dialogue, and awareness of global issues among students, faculty, and the wider community.

3.8.5.7 International development and engagement - Global Affairs supported UC Davis's commitment to global development through initiatives that addressed poverty,

inequality, and social justice. It facilitated partnerships with international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and governmental agencies to drive sustainable development projects and contribute to global well-being.

Overall, the relationship between Global Affairs and UC Davis was one of collaboration, coordination, and support. Global Affairs played a vital role in connecting UC Davis with the global community, fostering international collaborations, and advancing the university's global impact in research, education, and outreach.

3.9 Visit to Sierra Orchards Farm

3.9.1 Sierra Orchards Farm, located in California, was a prominent agricultural enterprise specialising in the cultivation of various tree crops, including walnuts, almonds, and prunes.

3.9.2 The farm has received the following support from the CDFA in its pursuit of sustainable agriculture practices, market access, research initiatives, and regulatory compliance:

3.9.2.1 Market Access and Promotion - The CDFA has played a significant role in assisting Sierra Orchards Farm in accessing domestic and international markets. The Department has facilitated market research, connected the farm with potential buyers and distributors, and supported participation in trade events and exhibitions. Through these efforts, the CDFA has helped Sierra Orchards Farm in expanding its market reach, establishing relationships with buyers, and increasing market visibility for their high-quality tree crops. This support has contributed to the farm's economic growth, diversification of sales channels, and enhanced market competitiveness.

3.9.2.2 Research and Innovation - Sierra Orchards Farm has benefited from the CDFA's research and innovation initiatives. The Department collaborated with research institutions and universities to advance agricultural knowledge, develop innovative practices, and address industry challenges. Through research partnerships, funding opportunities, and participation in research programmes, the CDFA has facilitated the integration of innovative research findings into the farm's operations. This support has enabled Sierra Orchards Farm to adopt new technologies, improve production efficiency, and enhance product quality, resulting in increased yields, reduced costs, and improved profitability.

3.9.2.3 Regulatory Compliance - The CDFA has provided Sierra Orchards Farm with guidance and support to navigate agricultural regulations and ensure regulatory compliance. The department assisted the farm in understanding and adhering to food safety standards, environmental regulations, and other compliance requirements. Through consultations,

workshops, and resources, the CDFA has helped Sierra Orchards Farm stay updated on evolving regulations, the implementation of necessary interventions, and the maintenance of food safety certifications. This support has helped the farm meet market demands, maintained consumer trust, and upheld the highest standards of food safety and environmental stewardship.

- 3.9.3 Sierra Orchards Farm has benefitted significantly from the support extended by the CDFA. Through their collaboration, the CDFA has assisted the farm in adopting sustainable agriculture practices, accessing domestic and international markets,

embracing research and innovation, and ensuring regulatory compliance. These efforts have not only contributed to the success and growth of Sierra Orchards Farm but have also reinforced its commitment to sustainable farming, product quality, and environmental stewardship. The partnership between Sierra Orchards Farm and the CDFA served as a notable example of how government support could bolster agricultural enterprises and contribute to a thriving and sustainable agricultural sector.

3.10 California Housing Partnership

- 3.10.1 The California Housing Partnership (CHP) was a non-profit organisation dedicated to preserving and expanding affordable housing opportunities throughout California.

- 3.10.2 The CHP's mission was to create and preserve affordable housing for low-income households in California. Its objectives included:

3.10.2.1 Preservation of existing affordable housing - CHP worked to protect and preserve existing affordable housing units from conversion to market-rate housing or demolition. It collaborated with housing developers, owners, and government agencies to maintain the long-term affordability of housing units.

3.10.2.2 Development of new affordable housing - CHP supported the development of new affordable housing by providing technical assistance, financial expertise, and access to resources for housing developers. It facilitated the creation of housing projects that met the needs of low-income individuals and families.

3.10.2.3 Policy advocacy and research - CHP advocated for policies and legislation that promoted affordable housing and equitable housing practices. It conducted research and analysis to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the impact of housing policies and the need for affordable housing investments.

3.10.3 The CHP played a pivotal role in addressing California's affordable housing crisis through its preservation efforts, support for new development, policy advocacy, and research initiatives. By collaborating with stakeholders, providing technical assistance, and advocating for affordable housing policies, CHP contributed to the creation and preservation of housing opportunities for low-income individuals and families.

3.10.4 California's budget for housing operated through a combination of state funding, programmes, and initiatives aimed at addressing the state's housing needs.

3.11 The Budget and fiscal review process (Committee Hearing)

- 3.11.1 The budget and fiscal review process in California involved the development, evaluation, and approval of the state's budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The process was as follows:
- 3.11.1.1 The process began with the Governor's submission of a proposed budget to the California State Legislature. The Governor's proposed budget outlined the state's spending priorities, revenue projections, and policy proposals.
 - 3.11.1.2 A non-partisan Legislative Analyst provided an independent analysis of the Governor's proposed budget. The Legislative Analyst evaluated revenue estimates, spending proposals, and provided recommendations to the Legislature.
 - 3.11.1.3 The Joint Budget Committee, composed of members from both the Assembly and Senate, conducted public hearings to review the Governor's proposed budget. These hearings allowed lawmakers to scrutinise individual department budgets, to evaluate programme performance, and consider public input.
 - 3.11.1.4 Following the Joint Budget Committee hearings, subcommittees were formed to review specific budget areas. These subcommittees conducted detailed evaluations of department budgets, programmes, and expenditures. They held public hearings, requested additional information, and made recommendations for modifications to the budget.
 - 3.11.1.5 The delegation attended the Subcommittee Hearing on the Budget and Fiscal Review on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy.
 - 3.11.1.6 The leadership of the Legislature and the Governor's office engaged in negotiations to reconcile any differences between the proposed budget and legislative priorities. This process involved discussions on funding levels, policy initiatives, and potential compromises.
 - 3.11.1.7 Once negotiations are completed, the Legislature votes on the final budget bill. A majority vote was required in both the Assembly and the Senate to pass the budget. After legislative approval, the budget was sent to the Governor for final consideration.
 - 3.11.1.8 The Governor had the power to sign the budget bill, veto specific items, or make line-item vetoes. Line-item vetoes allowed the Governor to remove or reduce funding for specific programmes or expenditures.
 - 3.11.1.9 Once the budget was approved, state agencies and departments used the allocated funds to implement programmes and provided services according to the budget's provisions. Throughout the fiscal year, fiscal oversight committees in the Legislature continued to monitor budget implementation and may conduct hearings on specific budget issues.
- 3.11.2 The budget and fiscal review process aimed to ensure transparency, accountability, and public input in the allocation of funds and the formulation of state fiscal policy.

4. Overview and programme in San Francisco (19 May 2023)

The delegation embarked on an unaccompanied tour to Silicon Valley and Napa Valley and engaged with locals on various matters.

Silicon Valley and Napa Valley were two of the most well-known regions in California. Both areas had unique characteristics that set them apart from each other, but they both offered significant economic benefits to the State.

4.1 Silicon Valley

4.1.1 Silicon Valley was in the southern part of the San Francisco Bay Area and was home to some of the biggest tech companies in the world such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Tesla. The region had become synonymous with innovation and technological advancements, which attracted entrepreneurs, investors, and talent from all over the world.

4.1.2 Silicon Valley's journey began in the mid-20th century when it transformed from an agricultural region into a technology-driven powerhouse. The term "Silicon Valley" originated from the abundance of silicon chip manufacturers that emerged in the area during the 1960's. Since then, it has become synonymous with technological innovation and the birthplace of numerous ground-breaking advancements.

4.1.3 One of Silicon Valley's unique characteristics was its concentration of venture capitalists who provided funding for startups. This network of investors provided access to capital that was unrivalled anywhere else in the world. In addition, there were several top-ranked universities in Silicon Valley such as Stanford University that produced talented graduates in science, engineering, and technology fields.

4.1.4 Another distinctive feature of Silicon Valley was its culture of collaboration and innovation. Companies often worked together on projects or shared resources to create new technologies. This environment encouraged creativity and risk-taking which has led to many groundbreaking discoveries.

4.1.5 The economic benefits of Silicon Valley were enormous. It was estimated that the region generated more than US\$ 275 billion annually and employed over 1 million people. Its contribution to California's economy made it one of the wealthiest regions in the world.

4.2 Napa Valley

4.2.1 Napa Valley was a wine-growing region located north of the San Francisco Bay Area. The valley stretched for 48 km from Napa County to Calistoga town in Sonoma County. It was known for producing some of the best wines globally due to its favourable climate conditions that supported grape cultivation.

4.2.2 One of the unique characteristics of Napa Valley was its combination of soil type, climate conditions, altitude levels, and water supply systems that gave wine grapes distinctive flavours based on their location within the valley. These characteristics have made Napa Valley famous worldwide as the premier destination for wine tourism.

4.2.3 Napa Valley's economic benefits were substantial. The region generated over US\$ 13 billion annually, and its wines accounted for more than 90% of California's total wine production. It was an essential part of California's agriculture industry and has created many job opportunities in vineyard management, winemaking, hospitality, and tourism sectors.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The delegation Recommended that:

5.1.1 The Department of Agriculture encourages young people's interest in agriculture and that efforts include the promotion of agricultural education and awareness in schools, showcasing the diverse and innovative aspects of the industry, highlighting successful young farmers and agri-preneurs, providing mentorship programs, offering financial support and incentives for young farmers, and fostering collaboration between the agricultural sector and educational institutions. By showcasing the opportunities, sustainability, and technological advancements in agriculture, young people may be more inclined to explore careers and interests in this vital industry.

5.1.2 The Department of Agriculture explores the H2A Visa process and embark on a campaign so that all farmworkers are aware of the opportunity and therefore able to participate in the Programme.

5.1.3 The Western Cape Provincial Parliament actively encourages public participation in the budget process by soliciting public comments, and engaging with stakeholders so as to enhance accountability and ensure that the budget reflects the needs and priorities of the people.

5.1.4 The Western Cape Parliament explore the possibility of establishing an independent entity, like California's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), to provide non-partisan analysis of the budget which could enhance the Parliament's ability to evaluate the proposed budget, assess revenue estimates, and make informed decisions based on objective analysis; and

5.1.5 The Western Cape Government enters a partnership with state agencies in California that have successfully diversified their energy sources. Relying heavily on a single energy provider, such as Eskom, can lead to vulnerabilities and challenges. By diversifying the energy mix, including incorporating more renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and biomass, South Africa can reduce its dependence on a single entity and enhance energy security.

6. Acknowledgement

The delegation wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the California State Senate and all agencies and senators who took the time to meet and engage.