

July 30, 2020

Subject: **ARO (Touchstone) in Terra Bella**

To: Whom It May Concern

The purpose of this letter is to share our grower-processor relationship that we've had with ARO (who has recently been acquired by Touchstone) for 8 years.

Our company, Pistacia Global, has been established since 2008 and currently farms 1500 acres of pistachios in the Terra Bella area. Each season, we send our harvest to ARO for processing. The close proximity of our ranches to their plant has been an invaluable part of our operations when transporting our crop during harvest each season. We've also invested a lot of time and effort over the years building positive working relationships and implementing best practices between staff. This has resulted in more efficient operations for our company during the busiest times of the year.

Due to the increase in acreage and crop volume, it is advantageous that we work with processors that are in close proximity to our ranches and who we have existing relationships with. We benefit from ARO's great customer service, competitive pricing and years invested in building strong, close working relationships. Furthermore, we believe our company would experience financial and operational hardships if our business relationship with ARO were severed beyond our control.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this matter. Correspondence can be sent to Vahid Salehi at vahid@pistaciaglobal.com or by phone at 559-802-3203

Sincerely,

Vahid Salehi, CEO
Pistacia Global, Inc.
P.O. Box 6834
Visalia, CA 93290

FRED RUIZ

1017 N. EL CAJON ST.
VISALIA, CA 93291

August 11, 2020

Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Pete Vander Poel III, Chairman of the Board
County of Tulare
2800 W. Burrel Avenue
Visalia, CA 93291

Dear Mr. Vander Poel:

I am pleased to offer this letter of support on behalf of the Farid Assemi expansion project in Tulare County. I have known the Assemi family for over twenty years. I can personally attest to their principles of ethics and their positive impact to the communities in which they do business.

The pistachio processing expansion, their first into Tulare County will be a great benefit to the County. The processing company in Terra Bella will provide job creation, tax revenue generation and have an overall long-term positive economic impact.

I would appreciate your consideration in approving the Assemi expansion. Please let me know if you have questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Fred Ruiz
Co-Founder & Chairman Emeritus
Ruiz Foods, Inc.

Terra Bella Ranch LLC Riverdale ranch LLC

1334 West Herndon, / Fresno, California 93711
(559) 431-1500 • Fax (559) 431-3452 • (800) 953-9357
Nader@malakandiamond.com

8/13/2020

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Touchstone Pistachio Company. I appreciate working with the Assemi Family. They are honest, reliable, and transparent in their business practices. With the growth of the pistachio industry there is an increasing need for processing facilities and a limited number of processing plants. Allowing Touchstone to continue to process creates choice of where our crops are sent. It fills a need as well as creating more competitive pricing.

We signed a 5-year contract with the past owner who had been processing in Terra Bella since the 1980s. This contract was extremely beneficial as one of our ranches (Terra Bella Ranch LLC. 500 acres) is within 5 miles of the facility. If unable to use the Touchstone facility, we will be forced to transport our crop an additional 40 miles, which will increase the cost to process our crop by a considerable margin.

This year is estimated to be the largest single crop on record at 1 billion pounds; with all of the processors operating at full capacity. As previous arrangements for processing have already been put into place, closing the Terra Bella plant will put our ranch in a precarious position. If we are unable to find someone to process our full crop, we will be unable to pay our vendors. The financial damage would be irreparable.

Sincerely,

Nader Malakan
Terra Bella Ranch LLC

