Policy Briefing on
“Critical Issues in Food and Agriculture: 2014”

with

Secretary Karen Ross

California Department of Food and Agriculture

Karen Ross was appointed Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture on January 12, 2011 by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. Secretary Ross has deep leadership experience in agricultural issues nationally, internationally, and here in California. Prior to joining CDFA, Secretary Ross was chief of staff for U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, a position she accepted in 2009. Before her time at the United States Department of Agriculture, Secretary Ross served more than thirteen years as President of the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG), based in Sacramento. During that same period she served as the Executive Director of Winegrape Growers of America, a coalition of state winegrower organizations, and as Executive Director of the California Wine Grape Growers Foundation, which sponsors scholarships for the children of vineyard employees. Among Secretary Ross’ many achievements at CAWG was the creation of the nationally-recognized Sustainable Winegrowing Program, which assists wine grape growers in maintaining the long-term viability of agricultural lands and encourages them to provide leadership in protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, and enhancing their local communities.