

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Land Access, Acquisition, and Ancestral Land Return Subcommittee Meeting Summary: September 26, 2024

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council ([SGC](#)) [website](#).

Roll Call

Members present:

- Nelson Hawkins, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Chair
- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Nathaniel Brown
- Darlene Franco
- Lawrence Harlan
- Liya Schwartzman

Members absent:

- Ruth Dahlquist-Willard
- James Nakahara
- Doria Robinson

Work Plan Discussion

Staff reviewed the definition of the *Land Access, Acquisition, and Ancestral Land Return* dimension and associated sections of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force (Task Force) Work Plan, noting that revisions are underway based on feedback from the August Task Force meeting. Staff invited comment from Subcommittee members to ensure alignment with the Subcommittee members' priorities.

Members suggested modifying “big landowner” language in the Work Plan, and staff committed to using a more precise term when referring to such landowners. Regarding

land markets, a member noted that these markets tend to favor corporations and addressing corporate landownership is of interest to them.

Members emphasized the importance of addressing the theft of tribal lands in the context of land back and repatriation, with a focus on transferring land from public to tribal ownership. Members suggested exploring examples of successful programs for potential solutions to replicate, like the Shuumi Land Tax voluntary tax program. This is a voluntary annual contribution made by non-Indigenous people living on the traditional territory of the Lisjan Ohlone people to support the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. They requested a speaker of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust for the Subcommittee. Additionally, Members proposed developing mechanisms and incentives for private individuals to return lands to tribes.

A member proposed incorporating ancestral land return as a potential solution to all the Subcommittee's issues identified in the Work Plan, rather than keeping it as an individual topic area. After discussion, Members agreed that ancestral land return should be incorporated as a solution for all the identified issues while also remaining a standalone topic.

Staff next shared a proposal and timeline for advancing the Subcommittee's work in between public Subcommittee and Task Force meetings, which included the formation of working groups to address various components of land access, acquisition, and ancestral land return.

Members asked staff to clarify the definition of succession planning. Staff shared their working definition and explained that the definition can be refined by members of the associated working group (see more regarding working groups below). Staff noted that tax exemptions and first right of refusal can be included in this topic. Members suggested the definition could include opportunities for landowners to transfer land to tribal entities or for families to transfer land to non-relatives. A member proposed renaming the term to "land succession strategies." Members noted significant overlap between succession and land markets. They emphasized the importance of the Subcommittee clearly defining these terms.

Staff next reviewed their proposals for working groups. Members inquired about the frequency of Subcommittee meetings, and Facilitator Wylie noted the challenges of scheduling such a large group. She outlined how working groups can function as an effective way to advance the work of the Task Force to meet deadlines efficiently. No formal action is needed to create working groups.

Members expressed concern about the duplication of work in working groups, and staff committed to preventing overlap.

A member proposed combining the working groups on land markets and succession. After discussion, it was decided that these working groups should remain separate. The following working groups were formed:

- Chair Hawkins created and joined a working group focused on succession.
- Members Harlan and Schwartzman created and joined a working group focused on public lands, including the transfer of public lands to tribal entities and private individuals.
- Member Brown created and joined a working group focused on land markets.
- Vice Chair Burgueno created and joined a working group focused on land back and suggested inviting Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy as a guest speaker.

A member noted that the Task Force's work has not yet focused on slavery or reparations and asked if the Subcommittee would like to take up this topic. Members supported this but emphasized the need to keep this work separate from efforts regarding Native communities. Staff committed to reviewing the work of the California Reparations Task Force and providing relevant information back to this Subcommittee. Based on this information, Members may consider forming a working group focused on reparations.

Staff suggested that the Subcommittee meet again in late October or early November to exchange updates on working group efforts and organize for the November 13-14 Task Force meeting.

Public Comment

Lauren Gucik

Staff shared upcoming meeting dates pertaining to the work of the Task Force and ended the meeting at 1:48 p.m.