

**Round 9 Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program Guidelines
Public Comments Log**

| Comment Number | Commentor | Section | Topic | Comment |
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| 1 | Native American Land Conservancy | Section 1: Introduction | Investment Targets | Please note, that although we appreciate that a minimum 5% of the funding should be allocated to Native American tribes and Native American led non-profit organizations within the investment targets, we believe it should be closer to 20% - 25%. |
| 2 | Native American Land Conservancy | Section 2: Capacity Grants | Eligible applicants (Capacity) | We acknowledge the updated verbiage to include Native American led non-profit organizations providing an opportunity for more Native American land and cultural resources to be preserved and protected. |
| 3 | Native American Land Conservancy | Section 2: Capacity Grants | Eligible applicants (Capacity) | We agree and acknowledge the update in the language in the Tier 2 capacity grant guidelines to include Native American cultural resources in the definition of agricultural conservation. |
| 4 | Native American Land Conservancy | General | Eligible applicants (General) | We agree that the updated SALC guidelines including support for both federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes is an improvement on the guidelines and will also help to develop non-profit opportunities for California Native American tribes. |
| 5 | Shayne Green | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Continued Ag Use | <p>Second, I want to provide context-specific comments regarding the interpretation of “continued agricultural use” as that phrase is used in the Round 9 Guidelines and manifest through SALC program implementation.</p> <p>Presently, thousands of acres of agricultural lands are on the market in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity Counties. These lands have been used primarily for Cannabis production during the last 20 years, consisting primarily of 20-160-acre parcels (sometimes larger) that were originally carved out of much larger tracts of working ranch and timber lands in the past. The active and imminent abandonment of these parcels by cultivators reflects a market trend towards fewer, larger Cannabis farms in the State in the wake of legalization. Whether or not these parcels are converted to rural residential uses; next-generation illegal Cannabis farms; or components of more traditional working ranch and timberlands is a standing question.</p> <p>Numerous agricultural landowners and their conservation partners within the region are now working to develop mechanisms for restoring and reclaiming these parcels as components of larger, adjacent working lands providing agricultural, open space, watershed, and wildlife habitat benefits (see attached draft white paper prepared by a local rancher; former NRCS District Conservationist; a Humboldt Area Foundation board member; and myself). Several ranchers, all of them either with a conservation easement on their property or in the process of placing one on their property, have contacted me recently inquiring what kind of support is available for these efforts from existing state programs.</p> <p>I believe the SALC Program and other California conservation programs can play an important role in this endeavor, and that such reclamation projects would be consistent with program priorities.</p> |
| 6 | California Farmland Trust | Section 2: Capacity Grants | Capacity Grants | The addition of capacity grants in SALC Round 8 was welcomed by CFT and we were thrilled to be awarded funding to increase our reach and impact to protect valuable farmland. CFT looks forward to sharing our progress and impact made available through the capacity grant with DOC and SGC in the coming years. |
| 7 | California Farmland Trust | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Associated Costs | The increase to \$60,000 for associated costs, made first available in Round 8, also remains helpful to cover rising costs required to complete easement acquisitions. |

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| 8 | California Farmland Trust | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Match Funding | Increasing the value available to acquire easements through SALC from 75% to 90% is an extremely welcomed proposed change. The acquisition value increase will reduce several barriers for certain projects and allow CFT to tackle additional farmland protection projects in areas of the state where match funds are sparse. The areas where match funding has been limited tends to be in areas of disadvantaged and low-income communities, and these areas would greatly benefit from projects that protect farmland and benefit the environment and economy. |
| 9 | California Farmland Trust | Section 1: Introduction | General Funding allocations | CFT was also pleased to see the ability to reallocate funds across the three components of SALC and no maximum award for easement acquisition. The flexibility will allow for ebb and flow given that the demand for acquisitions, planning and capacity grants can change from year to year. |
| 10 | California Farmland Trust | General | General | It has become evident over the last nine years that SALC is an essential tool for protecting farmland at risk of development as a climate resiliency tool, all while supporting applicants through the process. CFT is appreciative of the changes and believes they will continue to improve the impact and reach of SALC. |
| 11 | California Farmland Trust | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Stewardship funding | Two additional areas that CFT would like to suggest for consideration to further advance the program includes: Consider providing funding to establish a permanent stewardship and defense fund for each easement. Stewardship funds are necessary for land trusts to maintain easements overtime. DOC has taken steps in this direction in other contexts, such as including monitoring and management in the fundable deliverables for the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program and previously in the Agricultural Land Mitigation Program. CFT would encourage the option to be available through SALC. Providing for the long-term costs of holding conservation easements could broaden the reach and impact of SALC, particularly in underserved regions of the San Joaquin Valley and disadvantaged and low-income communities. |
| 12 | California Farmland Trust | At a Glance | Preproposal deadline | The timeline of the final Guidelines release in relation to the pre-proposal application due dates has been limiting. If there are major changes to the Guidelines, this leaves applicants with a short time period to prepare extensive pre-proposals, that are essentially full applications, which can be onerous. CFT would appreciate seeing at least a two-month time period from the final Guidelines release to the pre-proposal due date as many of the requirements, such as ordering and reviewing title reports, preparing maps, researching general plans and sustainable community strategies, etc., are time extensive. At a minimum, the template pre-proposal application should be made available sooner or prior than the release of the final Guidelines, especially if there are no changes from the previous round. |
| 13 | TNC | General | General | <p>Our letter focuses on two documents – the Draft Guidelines and the SALC Easement Template last updated in 2020. SALC Grants have the capacity to significantly impact California’s agricultural landscape. With annual funding equal to 2% of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund receipts, SALC can reliably direct funding to projects throughout the State for a cumulative impact that could be transformative over time. Given this potential, SALC and the perpetual easements it funds should be crafted to consider the role of the State’s agricultural system in addressing climate change and achieving the goal to protect 30% of the State’s biodiversity by 2030 (30x30).</p> <p>Our comments focus on four broad categories including Criteria Related to Risk of Conversion, Balanced Definition of Conservation Purpose, Intensification Restrictions, and Innovation.</p> |

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| 14 | TNC | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Risk of Conversion | <p>Criteria Related to Risk of Conversion :</p> <p>Currently SALC focuses funding on projects with a “near term” threat. This ultimately prevents funding from going to project areas that face future threats. Evaluating conversion risk is challenging in California given unrelenting population pressures that can lead to leapfrog development and new towns in areas where there was previously little or no evidence of development. Furthermore, once a region is under pressure of conversion to non-agricultural uses, a quality that potential SALC projects must prove, development can be hard to contain piecemeal as protection on one property simply pushes that development to adjacent properties.</p> <p>Focusing on near term threat also reduces SALC’s impact in the State. Properties where development pressures are measurable have a higher fair market value as the highest and best use is most likely conversion to residential or other non-agricultural uses. At a time when the State is trying to achieve ambitious conservation goals through 30x30, it is important to stretch conservation dollars across as many acres as possible by identifying those regions where per acre values have not yet become inflated by speculation. By allowing for the conservation of properties further away from existing development, more acres of agricultural land can be protected.</p> <p>These concerns can be addressed by relaxing project evaluation criteria associated with “Support for Infill/Risk for Conversion” and/or by reducing the relatively high 30-point score related to that criteria.</p> |
| 15 | TNC | Easement Template | Conservation Purpose | <p>Balanced Definition of Conservation Purpose : Conservation Purpose is foundational to evaluating enforcement of the easement. As currently defined, the stated Purpose of the easement is to “enable the Property to remain in productive agricultural use in perpetuity” and to ensure that all other values of the Property are “consistent with such use.” This definition relegates non-agricultural conservation values that notably also support greenhouse gas reduction goals, such as sequestering carbon, promoting soil health, preserving biodiversity, protecting open space character, etc., as secondary to agricultural use. It also ignores the possibility that climate change could suggest that some of California’s agricultural land is most beneficial if it is left fallow periodically or permanently and that some current agricultural uses and practices are inefficient and potentially damaging to the State’s resources. To allow greater flexibility in future interpretation of the easement, the Conservation Purpose should be revised as follows:</p> <p>Current definition of 1. Conservation Purpose: The conservation purpose (“Purpose”) of this Easement is to enable the Property to remain in productive agricultural use in perpetuity by preventing and correcting uses of the Property prohibited by the provisions of this Easement. To the extent that the preservation of [the open space character scenic, habitat,natural, or historic, etc. described in the project summary approved by the Council] values of the Property are consistent with such use, it is within the Purpose of this Easement to protect those values.</p> <p>Proposed definition of 1. Conservation Purpose: The conservation purpose (“Purpose”) of this Easement is to enable the Property to remain in productive agricultural use in perpetuity by preventing and correcting uses of the Property prohibited by the provisions of this Easement and to ensure that the productive agricultural use is consistent with the preservation of [the open space character scenic, habitat, natural, or historic, etc. and other conservation values described in the project summary approved by the Council] of the Property.</p> |

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| 16 | TNC | Easement Template | Restrictions on ag intensification | <p>Intensification Restrictions</p> <p>The SALC Program creates impediments to projects that seek to protect areas with high resource values within a property's boundaries. SALC allows for permitted restrictions on non-cultivated lands, however similar to concerns raised regarding the Conservation Purpose definition (above), these restrictions are required to be secondary to agricultural productivity on the property. Specifically, the Guidelines and easement template state that if agricultural intensification restrictions on non-cultivated land are proposed, they be consistent with the property's continuing agricultural use and that agricultural use of the property will not be substantially impaired.</p> <p>Requiring that resource areas remain secondary to agricultural use in perpetuity ignores the reality that California's expansive agricultural landscapes contain areas of highly important biodiversity and provide critical functions in addressing carbon storage, contributing to healthy waterways and ecosystems, and otherwise supporting nature-based solutions to our climate and extinction crises. Additionally, by specifying that these restrictions can only be applied to existing non-cultivated portions of the land, the documents suggest that the conversion of cultivated to a non-cultivated or restored state is not permitted on lands funded by SALC. A region's temperature range; water supply; soil conditions, including increased salination from sea level rise; or vulnerability to storms, erosion and other variables may change as a result of climate change. Such changes could compromise previously productive farm acreage and suggest that fallowing of the land or its restoration to non-cultivated uses such as habitat or as a storm surge buffer has higher cultural, environmental or even economic value for the remaining acreage and more broadly for the region and the State of California. As such, these alternative uses should be permitted.</p> |
| 17 | TNC | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Restrictions on ag intensification | <p>We recommend including the language below in italics specific to SALC's conditions for funding for easement and fee acquisitions on pages 39-40 of the Guidelines and within the deed language shared on the Department website (see Section 3, page 10 of the template).</p> <p>If agricultural intensification restrictions on cultivated and non-cultivated land are proposed for the purposes of preserving other conservation values such as <i>biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, soil health, water quantity or quality, etc.</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restriction will seek to be consistent with the property's continuing agricultural use, and • Agricultural use of the property will not be substantially impaired <i>in areas unimpacted by the restrictions</i> |

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| 18 | TNC | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Co-benefits | <p>Innovation</p> <p>At a time when the State and others around the globe are looking to nature-based solutions to address our climate crises, TNC encourages SALC to fund innovative projects that expand agricultural lands' ability to absorb carbon, improve soil health, improve groundwater quantity and quality, and potentially support biodiversity. Traditional agricultural practices can contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and impact water management. Agricultural innovation creates an opportunity to reverse this impact, however, some agricultural innovations could be perceived as reducing the land's commercial productivity.</p> <p>One option would be to consider funding permanent easements that keep land in annual crops to facilitate voluntary and compensated winter flooding for wildlife habitat and/or voluntary and compensated summer fallowing during droughts. Left unaddressed is the need for farmland easements that ensure the ability of land that remains in production to provide multiple societal benefits, including seasonal habitat and drought resilience.</p> <p>Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of significant droughts, making it necessary to build flexibility into our agricultural sector to enhance its resilience in the face of water shortages. Ensuring that a significant portion of California's irrigated cropland is planted to annual crops is one important way of maintaining flexibility to respond to drought while minimizing financial losses and ecological damage. By directing SALC funding to innovative projects and creating allowances for near-term or potentially permanent reductions in productivity, the SALC Program could continue to support California's ability to adapt to a changing climate. Language encouraging innovation is missing from the guidelines and easement template. Furthermore, some aspects of scoring criteria and easement language have the potential to lock in traditional farming methods and/or prevent innovative projects from scoring well or being eligible. We encourage SALC to integrate language supportive of innovative projects, to reduce impediments to this innovation, and to pro-actively seek projects that are working to identify ways in which our agricultural landscapes can respond effectively to climate change.</p> |
| 19 | Helianth Partners | Section 1: Introduction | Incorrect link | Page 7: The link provided to the CARB Community Investments webpage does work as a URL, but the map itself does not appear to be functioning. |
| 20 | Helianth Partners | Section 1: Introduction | Priority Populations | Page 10: Reference to a "farmer or rancher who is a member of a....tribe" is not inclusive of potential projects that might be owned by an organization (such as a Tribe) rather than an individual "Acquisition projects that provide secure land tenure to a beginning or Veteran farmer or rancher, a farmer or rancher who is a member of a Federally recognized or non-federally recognized California Native American tribe on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission, or to a farmer or rancher that is a resident of a priority population, as defined in these Guidelines, will be prioritized for funding and may receive one hundred percent funding for eligible costs." |
| 21 | Helianth Partners | Section 1: Introduction | Priority Populations | Page 10: same comment as above, but reference is under the added "Investment Targets" language |
| 22 | Helianth Partners | Section 1: Introduction | Publicly available data | Page 11: reference to publicly available data will limit projects involving Tribes who may need or want to keep certain information about an area of land or its uses out of the public domain; this is an area to consider how to mitigate in order to include more Tribal acquisition applicants |

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| 23 | Helianth Partners | General comment | Grant structure | <p>Additionally, I am submitting a suggestion for future SALC rounds which was posed by a national conservation stakeholder. Easement acquisition efforts would be greatly streamlined, and have the potential to include/attract more socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and Tribes, if some SALC funding were allotted in block grants or pools to a fiscal sponsor whereby multiple easement projects could be developed under that block grant or funding pool rather than as one-off individual projects. Apparently there is a precedent model that already exists which has been done through IRWM funding (an exact reference to the funding program is not known at this time). The funding pool could be issued with all the same restrictions and objectives that apply to SALC funding. This model increases the success of easement acquisition efforts because landholders receive the benefit in a more expedited manner and are more likely to champion the easement process to their peers. Additionally, by using a fiscal sponsor that has experience in the easement acquisition process, some barriers are removed for organizations that have less capacity to develop a highly involved grant application and manage ongoing implementation.</p> |
| 24 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | General comment | General | <p>First and foremost, we want to express our appreciation for the ongoing efforts by the Department of Conservation to refine the SALC program, and in the process, provide statewide leadership to streamline the application process. This is critically important for strengthening equitable access to these programs, especially for organizations with limited resources. More specifically, we appreciate and continue to support the following prior improvements that were carried forward into this round of the guidelines:</p> |
| 25 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Selection criteria | The streamlining of selection criteria for the conservation easement and fee acquisition grants and taking a portfolio approach that prioritizes protecting agricultural lands at risk of conversion. |
| 26 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 2: Capacity Grants | Funding | Increased investments in capacity grants and the expansion of the SALCP planning grants. |
| 27 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Narrative | The narrative approach that allows more flexibility in articulating how a project will support the program's goals. |
| 28 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Fee Acquisitions | The opportunity to purchase land under fee acquisition. |
| 29 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Eligible projects | The allocation of funding for acquisition grants to farmers that are members of a Native American tribe. |
| 30 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 4: Planning Grants | Eligible applicants | The ability for special districts with a mission related to agricultural preservation to be eligible for planning grants if they work with an entity that has land use authority. |
| 31 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Match funding requirement | <p>In the Round 9 Draft Guidelines, we also appreciate and support the following new proposals in Section 3: Agricultural Conservation Acquisition Grants:</p> <p>The increase in the potential coverage of an award from 75% of easement value to 90%. This will greatly help many organizations complete such transactions in the face of limited access to matching funds.</p> |
| 32 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Appraisals | The increase from 12 to 24 months for the period between appraisal and escrow closing. |

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| 33 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | | When referring to description of soil quality, we suggest using Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) data for cultivated lands in addition to rangelands as it focuses primarily on composition of soil, whereas FMMP focuses on current uses. We also suggest updating FMMP to focus primarily on soil composition so that lands currently fallowed - but capable of productive yields - are not excluded. |
| 34 | Santa Clara Valley Open Space District | Section 1: Introduction | | The current requirement, within the Priority Populations section on Page 6, that 25% of available GGRF monies a project is located within a disadvantaged community, can eliminate projects that would benefit those communities even if they are technically outside of those census tract boundaries. To the degree possible within existing statute, we suggest applicants be allowed to demonstrate, through narrative, how a project benefits priority populations, whether those fall into the disadvantaged community, low-income household, or low-income community definitions, as defined within the State's Health and Safety Code. |
| 35 | CalCAN | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | | Increasing acquisition funds from 75% to 90% of the value of the agricultural conservation easements and fee acquisition costs. This change will help lower barriers to participation for applicants that face challenges with securing matching funds. |
| 36 | CalCAN | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | | Allowing up to 100% of fair market value for fee acquisition costs for tribes, tribal nonprofits and projects where tribes and tribal nonprofits will become owners of the conserved land. We support this proposed change to provide increased support to projects submitted by tribes, tribal nonprofits, and projects where tribes will become the owners of conserved land. |
| 37 | CalCAN | Section 1: Introduction | | Flexibility to reallocate funds to different components within the program. Given variability in the number of applications across the three categories of SALC investments from year to year, the ability to reallocate funds across the three components is a commonsense change that provides added flexibility to adapt to changing demand. |
| 38 | CalCAN | Section 4: Planning Grants | Funding for Priority Population | Allowing planning projects that can demonstrate that they provide meaningful benefits to a priority population, as defined in these guidelines, to potentially be eligible for 100% funding. Since priority populations are ones that face disproportionate levels of environmental hazards and often lack the financial and planning resources due to historic and ongoing disinvestment, providing a higher level of support for these projects can help advance a more equitable allocation of SALC resources. |
| 39 | CalCAN | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Reducing burdens | Encouraging projects located within or adjacent to a disadvantaged community or low income community to develop and implement a management plan that, to the extent feasible, reduces specified potential burdens to disadvantaged and low-income communities. We appreciate the inclusion of this recommendation and further suggest that the department go beyond this recommendation by offering training and support to applicants that elect to develop and implement management plans. Furthermore, the Department may wish to consider tracking the total number of projects within or adjacent to disadvantaged communities that choose to develop and implement management plans. |
| 40 | CalCAN | General | Community Engagement | Requiring inclusive stakeholder and community engagement and outreach activities and specifying that community outreach should include information about the project and the process for community participation and input. |

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| 41 | CalCAN | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Ag Use | We also respectfully request further clarification on how applications will be evaluated when a property is not currently used for commercial agricultural production. Specifically, page 30 of the draft guidelines states that eligibility for Agricultural Conservation Acquisitions includes potential projects where “the property is expected to be used for, and is large enough to sustain, commercial agricultural production.” Further information on the types of documentation and evidence that could be included to document a plan to commence or recommence agricultural use would be especially appreciated. |
| 42 | CalCAN | Section 4: Planning Grants | Planning Grants Application Cycle | Finally, while not directly related to the draft guidelines, we urge the department to consult with cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, and local area formation commissions to understand the barriers that prevent these entities from applying for planning grants under the SALC program and to address those to the extent possible. Where appropriate it may be worth considering aligning application criteria and timing with other state planning grants should there be future rounds of funding for those. For example, the Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant and the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development could be potential programs to look to since both seek to promote sustainable development patterns, reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. |
| 43 | Community Water Center | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | | We want to ensure that the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program protects drinking water by preventing harmful impacts to groundwater and promoting multibenefit agricultural practices. Relatedly, it would be beneficial to include protecting groundwater levels and groundwater quality for drinking water uses to SALC’s listed “Environmental Co-Benefits” and “Public Health Co-Benefits.” |
| 44 | Community Water Center | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | | Acquisition grants: competitive grants will be awarded to cover up to ninety (90%) of the value of the agricultural conservation easement; |
| 45 | Community Water Center | Section 2: Capacity Grants | | Capacity grants: removed staff limitations, replaced \$3M with 5% funding to provide more flexibility; and |
| 46 | Community Water Center | Section 4: Planning Grants | | Planning grants: more selection criteria points are provided for proposals that benefit a priority population or residents of a priority population; beginning or Veteran farmers and ranchers; and/or California Native American Tribes. |
| 47 | Community Water Center | Section 3: Acquisition Grants | Priority Populations | <p>SALC Should Further Prioritize Investments to Priority Populations by Including Small to Medium Sized Farms.</p> <p>We appreciate that the SALC Guidelines prioritizes investments to disadvantaged communities (DACs) and incorporates California Air Resources Board’s definition of “priority population” and California Department of Food and Agriculture’s definition of “socially disadvantaged farmer.”² However, as drought drives more agricultural land to be fallowed, it is important that small and medium sized farms are prioritized in this program. The SALC Guidelines note that acquisition projects are only eligible if the farm is “large enough to sustain commercial agricultural production.”³ We recommend that the Guidelines clarify that the size of a farm will not prevent small and medium sized farms from receiving SALC sponsored funds—as both small and medium sized farms can sustain commercial agricultural production.</p> <p>Additionally, the Guidelines state that for a project to meaningfully benefit a priority population it can be located “[a] half-mile of a disadvantaged community and within a low-income community census tract.”⁴ Many disadvantaged communities in the Central Valley and on the Central Coast are located in close proximity to industrial agriculture. To avoid the consolidation of large-scale farms near disadvantaged communities, which contribute to declining groundwater levels, reduced socioeconomic opportunities, and groundwater contamination, we emphasize that the Guidelines prioritize investments to small and medium sized farms.</p> |

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| <p>48</p> <p>Community Water Center</p> | <p>Section 3: Acquisition Grants</p> <p>Sustainable Land Management Practices</p> | <p>SALC Should Encourage Organic, Regenerative, and Agroecological Land Management Practices to Maximize Benefits to DACs</p> <p>We recommend that SALC encourage projects located within or adjacent to a disadvantaged community or low income community to develop and implement land management plans that utilize organic, regenerative, and agroecological land management practices.</p> <p><i>Organic</i> : Organic soil fertility management practices that cultivate soil health allow an economically viable move away from the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides. Organic soil fertility management such as cover cropping, orchard recycling, and compost application organically improve crop health, reduce water usage, can contribute to protection of local drinking water sources, and can increase on-farm productivity.</p> <p><i>Regenerative</i> : Regenerative farming practices focus on restoring and rebuilding soil health, increasing biodiversity, and enhancing ecosystem services through farming practices that promote natural ecological processes. This includes practices such as cover cropping, crop rotation, reduced tillage, and the integration of livestock into farming systems. The goal of regenerative agriculture is to create a self-sustaining and resilient farming system that can produce healthy food while also improving the health of the soil, the environment, and local communities.</p> <p><i>Agroecological</i>: Agroecology is the science of applying ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable food systems. It emphasizes the importance of local knowledge, community-based decision-making, and the integration of ecological, social, and economic factors. Agroecology seeks to build resilient food systems that can provide food security and nutrition while also protecting the environment and promoting social justice.</p> <p>These practices also carry the many associated benefits of minimizing leaching and drift of pesticides into disadvantaged communities and schools, sequestering carbon in the soil, and creating healthy jobs.</p> <p>SALC can offer training and support to applicants that elect to develop and implement organic and agroecological land management practices which support healthy soils and associated drinking water and climate mitigation benefits. We ask that the SALC Guidelines encourage grantees to use these practices by sponsoring or hosting workshops and directing applicants to the array of funding programs that defray the costs of adoption of these practices such as the State Healthy Soils Program and the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program.⁵ These programs employ an incentive-based model to encourage farmers to adopt better water management practices on their farm that conserve this precious resource, reduce groundwater contamination, and improve soil health.</p> |
| <p>49</p> <p>Community Water Center</p> | <p>General</p> <p>Cross-program coordination</p> | <p>SALC Should Encourage Coordination with Key Programs to Ensure Drinking Water Needs Are Protected.</p> <p>As mentioned before, many industrial agricultural practices have significant harmful impacts to groundwater levels and groundwater quality, which can contribute to households losing access to drinking water. These impacts could be prevented through interagency coordination. State and local agencies administer a large number of programs that have overlapping goals (groundwater protection is one example). To ensure the success of SALC in disadvantaged communities, we recommend that SALC encourage grantees to coordinate with State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program, Healthy Soils Program, Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act plans, SB552 Drought Task Forces, Agricultural Order 4.0, Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability, and other key programs. One example of this coordination is Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Agency working with Tulare County and other partners to administer the SALC program.⁶ Staff can provide technical assistance to facilitate interagency coordination.</p> |