

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force



Aug. 13, 2025 | 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

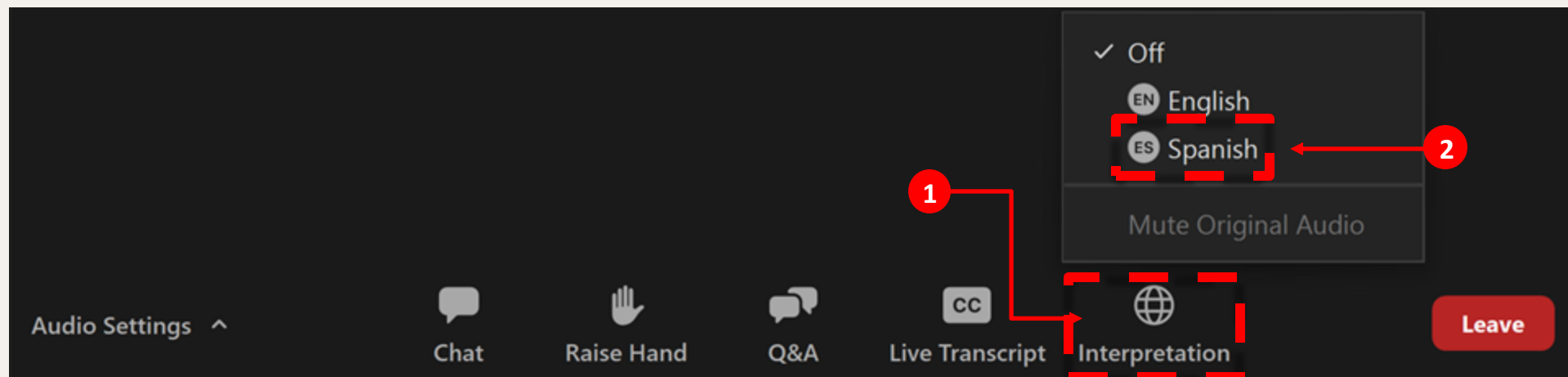
Aug. 14, 2025 | 8:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Arcata, California

Listening to Language Interpretation

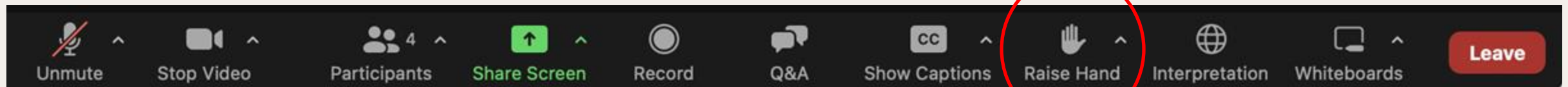
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Public Comment Process

IN PERSON

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Participation Guidelines



**Share,
Listen, Learn**



**Respect Different
Perspectives**



Stay on Point

Agenda Review – Day 1

Wednesday, Aug. 13

- **Approval of Meeting Summary** from May 14-15, 2025
- **Staff Report**
- **Discussion:** Engagement Reports
- **Working Session:** Interactive Discussions on Report
- **General Public Comment**

Agenda Review – Day 2

Thursday, Aug. 14

- **Discussion:** Engagement Reports, Arcata Site Visits
- **Working Session:** Interactive Discussions on Report
- **Work Planning and Next Steps**
- **General Public Comment**

Roll Call

Welcome Remarks



**Meeting Summary from
May 14-15, 2025**

Public Comment

Re: Meeting Summary

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Staff Report

Staff Report: Announcements

- California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Draft Tribal Stewardship Policy released
- Recently released reports linked in the briefing packet and added to the public list
- Task Force member announcements

Staff Report: Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittee meetings

- Community Outreach: May 29, 2025
- AB 524 Subcommittee: June 25, 2025
- Grants & Resources: June 27, 2025

Staff Report: Work updates

- Interagency review
- Case studies
- Local assistance funds

Staff Report: Budget Update

Current as of May 31, 2025

Category	FY 22-23 & 23-24 expenditures	FY 24-25 expenditures thru 05/2025	Total funds obligated	Total budgeted	Total budget remaining
Personnel (SGC staff)	\$157,875	\$367,235	\$1,100,760	\$1,100,760	\$0
Operating expenses (travel, facilitator, language access, etc.)	\$100,429	\$239,739	\$305,524	\$884,240	\$238,548
Research and technical assistance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$270,000	\$270,000
Local assistance (e.g., grants, pilot projects, research)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Total	\$258,304	\$606,974	\$1,406,284	\$3,255,000	\$1,508,548

Public Comment

Re: Staff Report

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Community Engagement Report

Community Engagement Overview

Community engagement for the Task Force was conducted in two parallel tracks since May 2025 to expand capacity to engage a wider diversity of priority producers and land stewards.

SGC & UCANR Since May 2025:

- Two parallel engagement efforts (SGC, UCANR)
- Engaged 180+ priority producers, land stewards & technical assistance providers in English, Spanish, Mixteco, Chinese, Korean
- Engagement sessions, meetings, interviews
- Sent letter to Tribal Nations (by 8/31)
 - 1 response

SGC Community Engagement

Staff and Task Force members requested & conducted extensive community engagement to solicit input on their draft recommendations in the May and June Draft Reports.

SGC Outcomes Since May 2025:

- Engaged 90+ priority producers, land stewards & TA providers
 - 3 Tribal engagement sessions
 - 5 engagement sessions with priority producers
- 4 presentations at conferences/ meetings (2 Tribal focus)
- Build knowledge, interest and investment ALETF's among priority communities & the public

Since May 2025:

- Follow up with those who have supported ALETF & engaged in your work
- Invites sent to August 20 Town Hall

SGC Engagement Insights

“We are fighting to make farming a dignified path to prosperity.”

Themes:

- Overview: Add more specific detail on histories of land inequity in CA; for example:
 - of Black farmers and land loss in California including the racism in agriculture and the plantation economy that was imported here from the deep south.
- Goal 1: Ancestral land return means free of cost to the Tribe and free of restrictions
 - Returned land should be high quality, desirable land. If not, resources and funding should be available for restoration and stewardship.
- Goal 2: Those who are responsible for soil and water contamination should be responsible for funding remediation.
 - Funding should be directed to communities and small growers to buy and remediate land that has been damaged by industrial agriculture.
- Goal 2: Expand accessibility to public land and facilitate urban agriculture through removing prohibitive zoning and other barriers.

SGC Engagement Insights

Patterns and commonalities were identified in addition to many new and unique insights across geographies and communities.

Themes:

- Goal 3: Competition for land with large businesses, corporate agriculture, and developers.
 - Investment firms are buying land as an investment tool and not for food production.
- Goal 3: Support small farmers to start cooperatives in which they can share land, knowledge, sales channels, and resources.
- Goal 3: Improve design, implementation, and equity focus of state funding programs; Technical assistance for land transition/ transaction should be tailored and localized.
- Goal 4: Update zoning and conservation tools to allow for housing and land stewardship activities. Ensure state planning and land use regulations do not interfere with Tribal authority and sovereignty.

UCANR Community Engagement

Informed by the guidance of the Task Force and Community Outreach Subcommittee, staff worked with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources to reach more people and to ensure thorough synthesis and reporting.

UCANR Outcomes Since May 2025:

- Engaged 90+ priority producers, land stewards & TA providers
- Detailed summaries for Task Force and the public
- Nuanced insights & executive summary

UCANR Team

- **Dr. Lucy Diekmann**, Urban Agriculture & Food Systems Advisor for Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties
- **Dr. Chandra Richards**, Land Use Academic Coordinator II for Southern California Region
- **Cristina Murillo Barrick**, Bay Area Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), Community Development Advisor, Climate Action & Land Access Project Co-lead

Community Engagement Next Steps

Participants often asked what will happen after the recommendations are published and the Task Force has emphasized the importance of following up and closing the loop.

What's ahead:

- August 20 Town Halls
- Written comment by August 31
- Incorporate insights for Oct. Draft
- Working Group(s)

Planned Outreach:

- Continue sharing ALETF work at conferences between now – June 2026
- Distribute final draft January – June 2026

Public Comment

Re: Engagement Reports

Public Comment Process

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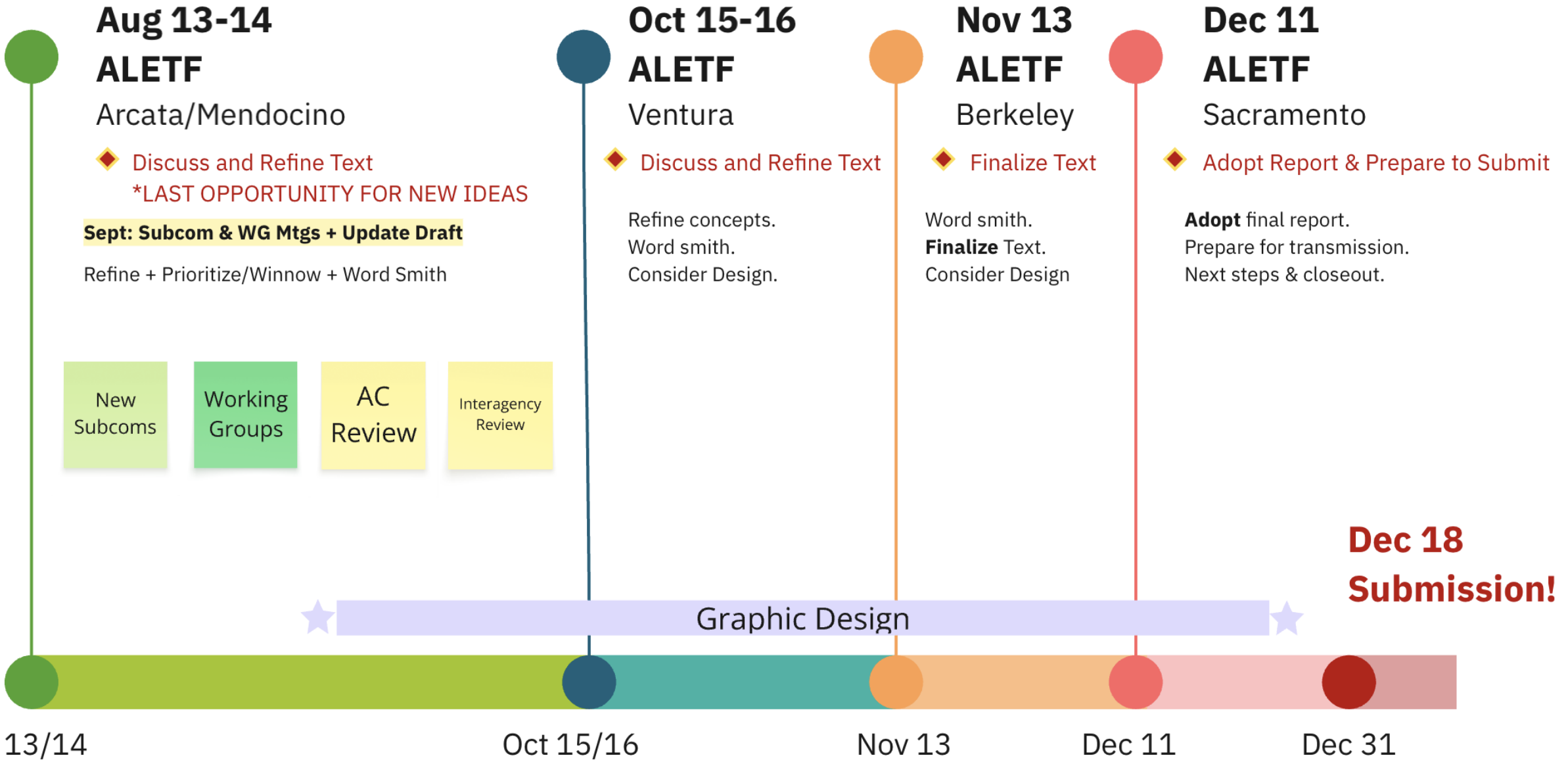
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15 Minute Break

Working Session



Summary of key revisions since May

Process and Summary

- **May 16-June 12:** Staff revised draft based on Task Force feedback
- **June 13-July 14:** Working Groups met and revised language
 - Staff and Advisory Committee support as requested
- **July 14-Aug 28:** Staff consolidated working group language and reorganized report
 - Added Discussion Items to briefing packet

Summary of key revisions since May

Four Consolidated Goals:

1. Tribal stewardship and land return
2. Protected and thriving agricultural lands
3. Equitable land transition and acquisition
4. Secure land tenure

Plan for Today & Tomorrow

Generally:

- Dedicate a **strict time limit (~35 mins)** for each Report discussion section
- Review results from informal “level of support” poll to jumpstart conversation
- Track comments in spreadsheet to inform next steps
- Discussion Order:
 - General comments on report structure, language
 - Goals and subgoals in chronological order
 - New concepts

Plan for Today & Tomorrow

Important Things to Remember:

- ✓ All recommendations will need wordsmithing
- ✓ We don't need to finalize every detail yet
- ✓ Disagreement or uncertainty is valuable
- ✓ A few “don't support” votes won't automatically cut a recommendation BUT we need to determine a path forward

Look Ahead: Continuing the Work

Potential Working Groups and Subcommittees

Working Groups

- Interagency Feedback
- Tone and Consistency Review
- Engagement Insights (x2)

Subcommittees:

- One for each goal to discuss remaining issues/concerns

General Feedback

- Open discussion

Informal Poll Results

Levels of support:

- **Support** – I support including this recommendation in the report
- **Somewhat Support** – I somewhat support including this recommendation (e.g., with language adjustments and/or more details worked out)
- **Unsure** – I'm not sure how I feel yet, or I need more information
- **Don't Support** – I do not support including this recommendation in the report

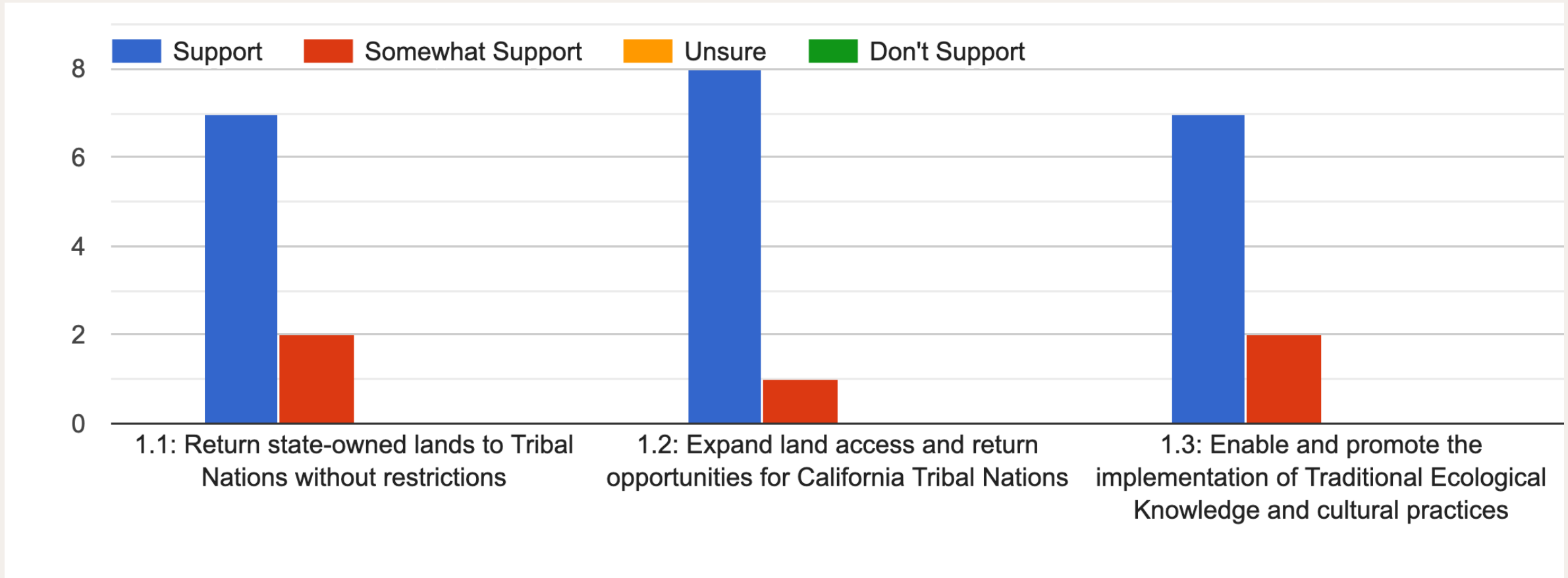
Informal Poll Results

Goal 1: Tribal stewardship and land return

Recommendations:

- **1.1** Return state-owned lands to Tribal Nations
- **1.2** Expand land access and return opportunities for CA Tribal Nations
- **1.3** Enable and promote the implementation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Goal 1: Tribal Stewardship and Land Return



- 100% respondents Support of Somewhat Support all subgoals

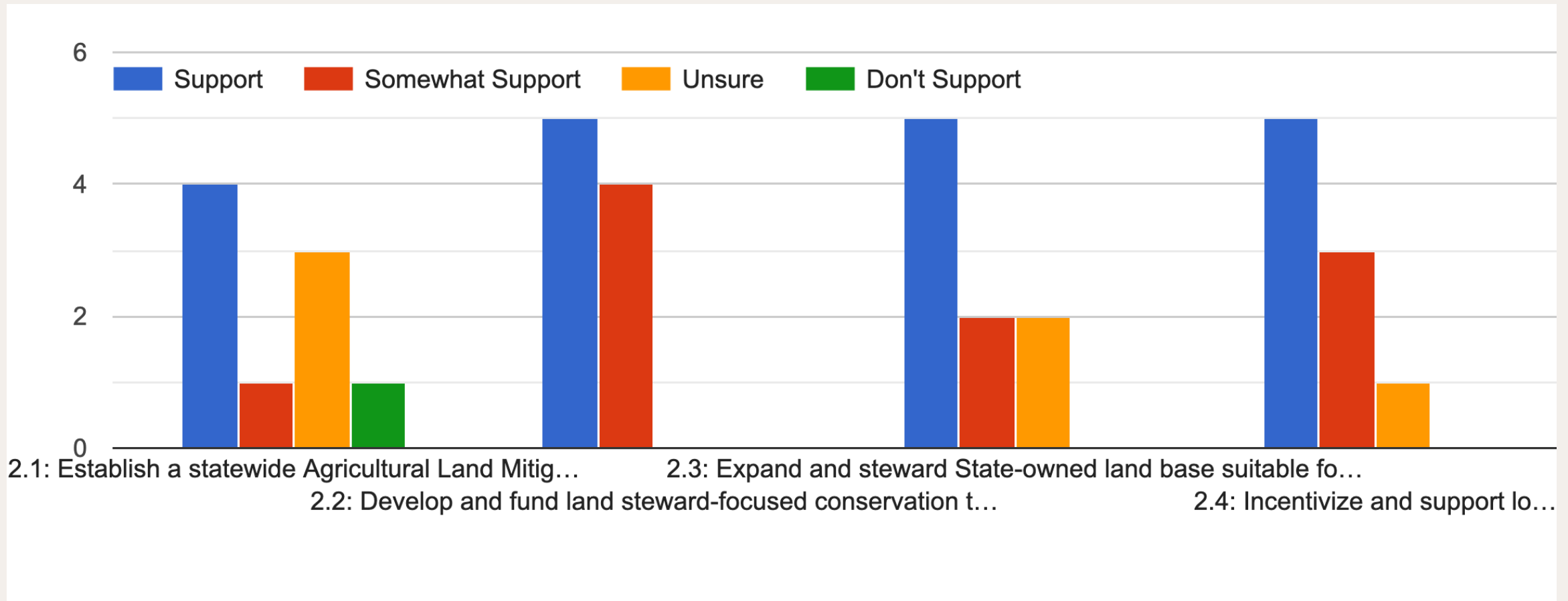
Informal Poll Results

Goal 2: Protected and thriving agricultural lands

Recommendations:

- **2.1** Establish a statewide Agricultural Land Mitigation program
- **2.2** Develop and fund land steward-focused conservation tools
- **2.3** Expand and steward state-owned land base suitable for agriculture
- **2.4** Incentivize and support local governments to protect and lease viable agricultural land

Goal 2: Protected and Thriving Agricultural Lands



- **Support** is largest response category for all four subgoals
- **2.1:** Biggest spread of responses
- **2.2:** All respondents Support or Somewhat Support
- Unsure and don't Support responses are minimal

Public Comment

Re: Working Session

Public Comment Process

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Lunch Break 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Working Session, Cont.

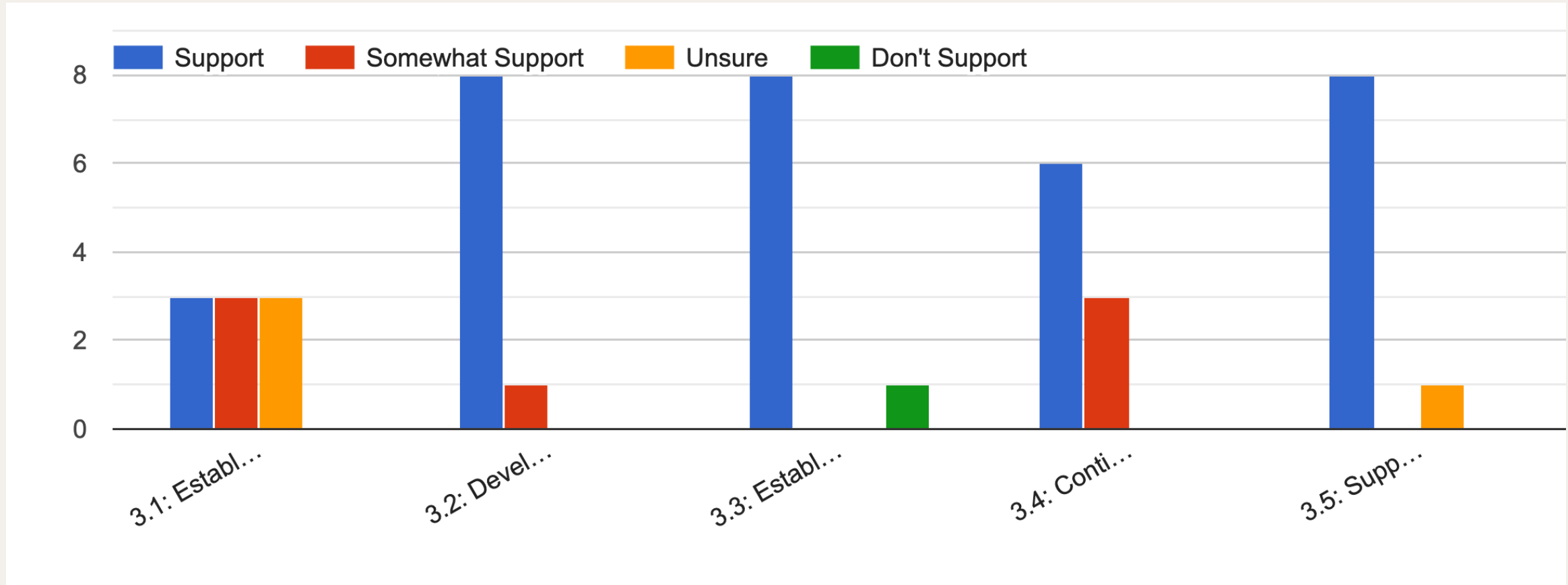
Informal Poll Results

Goal 3: Equitable Land Transition and Acquisition

Recommendations:

- **3.1** Establish and fund a Land Observatory
- **3.2** Develop first opportunity to purchase ordinances
- **3.3** Establish new funding programs that are designed to serve priority producers and land stewards
- **3.4** Continually evaluate and improve funding programs
- **3.5** Support tailored technical assistance and capacity building

Goal 3: Equitable Land Transition and Acquisition



- **Support** is most common response for all subgoals
- **Somewhat Support** is the second most frequent → broad positive sentiment
- **Unsure** and **Don't Support** responses are minimal

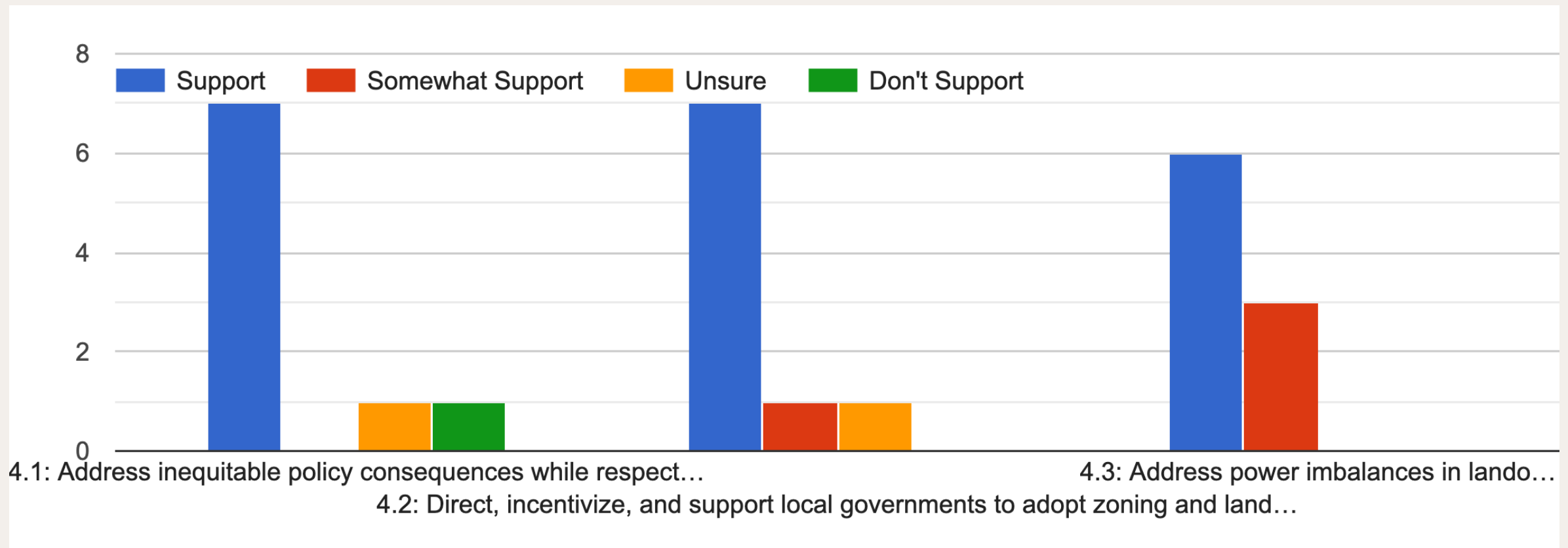
Informal Poll Results

Goal 4: Secure Land Tenure

Recommendations:

- **4.1** Address inequitable policy consequences while respecting the intention of the law
- **4.2** Direct, incentivize, and support local governments to adopt zoning and land use planning practices that facilitate secure land tenure and stewardship
- **4.3** Address power imbalances in landowner-tenant relationships

Goal 4: Secure Land Tenure



- Most respondents **support** these subgoals
- 4.1 enjoys support from all respondents
- 4.2 most work may be needed to strengthen subgoal

Public Comment

Re: Working Session

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General Public Comment

Agenda Review – Day 2

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- **Working Session:** Interactive Discussions on Report
- **Work Planning and Next Steps**
- **General Public Comment**

Thank You!

The ALETF reconvenes tomorrow 08/14 at 8:15 am

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force



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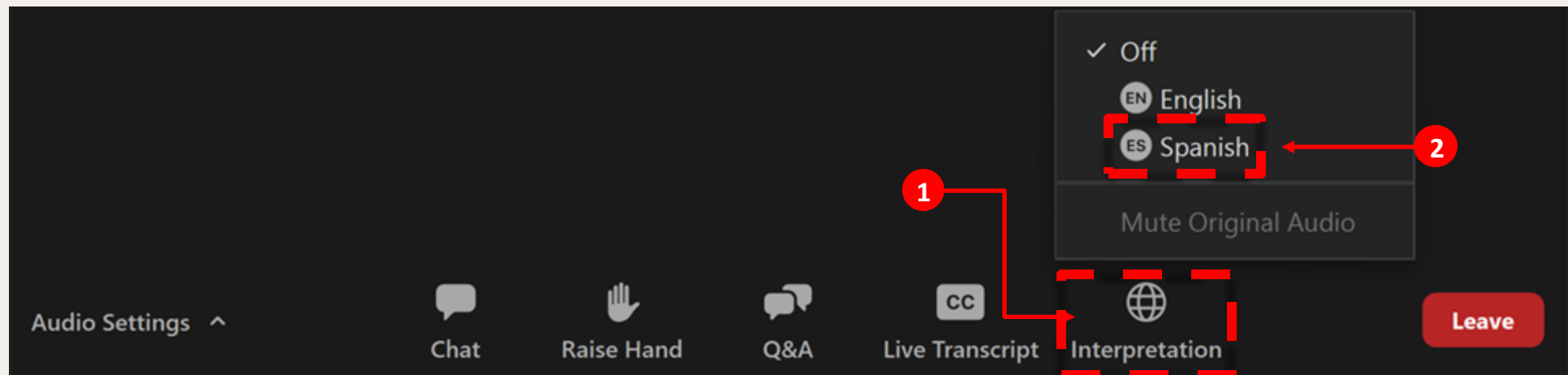
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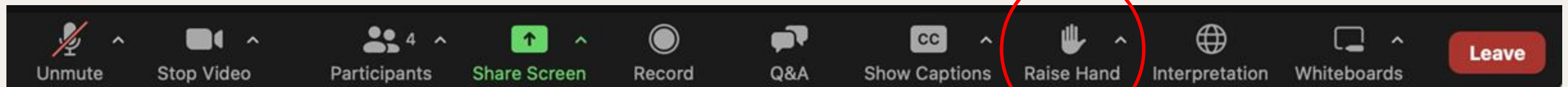
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Roll Call

Agenda Review – Day 2

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Engagement Reports

- Site Visits, Arcata

Public Comment

Re: Engagement Reports

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Working Session

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

Discussion Items:

1. New government entities
2. Cropland repurposing
3. Urban and rural infrastructure
4. Land consolidation
5. Additional proposals

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

1: New government entities

- Agriculture Ombuds Program
- Department of Agricultural Equity
- Expand the Capacity of CDFA's Farmer Equity Office
- Priority Producer and Land Steward Complaint Streamlining Program

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

Existing language in report re: new government entities

- Tribal State Land Commission (1.1.b): “Establish and fund a Tribal Lands Return Commission comprised of regionally diverse delegates of federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Tribal Nations.”
- Land Observatory (3.1): “Establish and fund a Land Observatory”
- Technical Assistance Regional Cohorts (3.5.b): “Establish and fund regional cohorts of technical assistance providers focused on land access for priority producers and land stewards in more effective, thorough, and equitable ways.

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

2. Cropland repurposing

- Review Working Group language
- Should staff incorporate this language into Goal 2?

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

3. Urban and rural infrastructure (urban ag)

- Review Working Group language
- Should staff incorporate this language into the report?

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

4. Land consolidation

- Review Working Group language
- Should staff incorporate this language into Goal 3?

Working Group Reports on Discussion Items

5. Additional proposals

- List of federally recognized Tribal Nations, acreage, and membership
Should staff add this information to the appendix?
- CEQA streamlining and coastal commission permitting
Should staff incorporate these ideas into Goal 4?

15 Minute Break

Working Session, Continued

Work Planning and Next Steps

Work Planning and Next Steps

Overview:

- Report Mock-up
- Timeline & Deadlines
- Assign Working Groups & Subcommittees

Historical context and contemporary barriers

California's history, like that of the U.S., has been characterized by historical injustices, including centuries of land theft and discriminatory practices, that underlie current disparities. California's agricultural history is intertwined with a series of State immigration laws and exclusion acts intended to maintain a low-cost supply of farm labor without creating competition for land, as Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Black, and Mexican farmers all saw their property rights denied.¹

The State of California was founded on the violent removal of California Tribal Nations from their lands, setting the stage for discriminatory laws and practices that persist today.²

Racial terror and land theft destroyed thriving African Americans communities, while discriminatory lending practices by the USDA and other agencies led to African American farmers being pushed off

1. Fuller, Vernon. "The Supply of Agricultural Labor as a Factor in the Evolution of Farm Organization in CA." US Congress. Committee on Education and Labor. Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor, hearings, 76th Congress, 3rd session (74th Congress), Exhibit 8762-A, January 1940.

2. Executive Order N-15-9

their land.³ A series of State-backed Federal policies, from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920, barred Asian immigrants from buying and leasing farmland.⁴ In 1942, Executive Order 9066 led to the forced removal and incarceration of more than 122,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast.⁵

In the same year, to address a national shortage in agricultural labor, the Bracero Program was established to bring Mexican farmworkers to the U.S., setting the stage for the State's current reliance on migrant labor, especially from Mexico and Central

3. California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Final Report. 2023. pp. 484-5. <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf>

4. Minkoff-Zern, L-A, Peluso, N, Sowerwine, J, Getz, C. 2011. Race and regulation: Asian immigrants in California agriculture, in Alkon, AH, Agyeman, J eds., Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability. Boston, MA: The MIT Press. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8922.001.0001>

5. Incarceration of Japanese Americans - Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park, U.S. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/rori/learn/historyculture/incarceration-of-japanese-americans.htm>

America.⁶ Too often, farmworkers face exploitative working and living conditions; a 2022 UC Merced survey found that farmworkers in California face a range of challenges, from employer wage withholding to food insecurity.⁷ Women farmworkers can face additional risks including higher rates of pesticide poisoning.⁸

6. Mitchell, D. 2010. Battle/fields: Braceros, agribusiness, and the violent reproduction of the California agricultural landscape during World War II. Journal of Historical Geography 36(2): 143-156. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2010.01.003>

7. Brown, Paul, Edward Flores, and Ana Padilla. 2022. Farmworker Health in California. University of California, Merced. https://clc.ucmerced.edu/sites/clc.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/fwhs_report_2.2.2383.pdf.

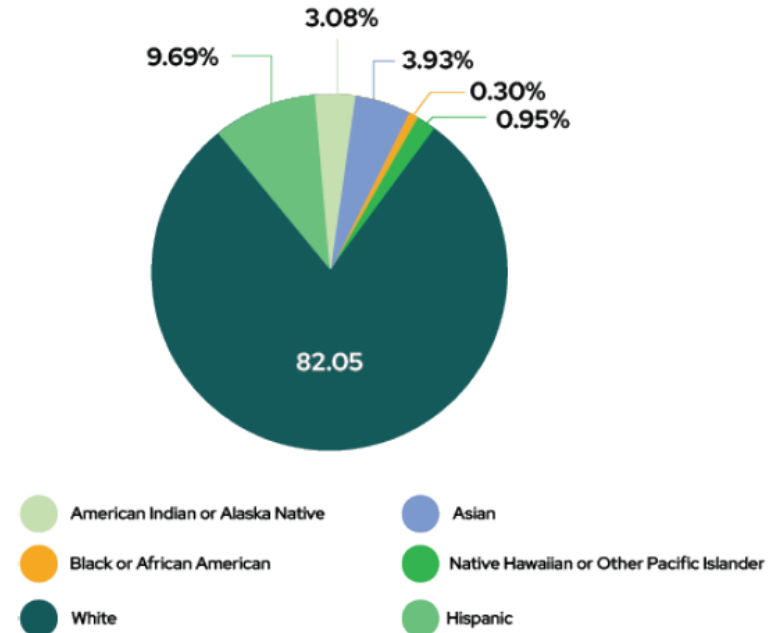
8. Ibid, 37. It is important to note that while this report focuses on the role of land ownership and secure tenure in alleviating inequities in the agricultural sector, it is also necessary to address the ongoing exploitation of farmworkers by farm owners.

As a result of these and other State and Federal policies, the wealth of the U.S., including that of its agriculture industry, has been built on stolen land and the forced labor of California Tribal Nations, enslaved African Americans, and other exploited communities, who have been systematically excluded from land ownership and wealth-building opportunities.⁹ Recent research points to billions of dollars lost in wealth for Tribal Nations and Black communities due to government-enacted dispossession.¹⁰

9. Trotter, Workers on Arrival: Black Labor and the Making of America (2019) pp. xvi, xx-xxi; The California Reparations Report, 2023. Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121/report>;

10. Farrell, J, Burow, PB, McConnell, K, Bayham, J, Whyte, K, Koss, G. 2021. Effects of land dispossession and forced migration on indigenous peoples in North America. Science 374(6567). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.abe4943>;

Figure 1: Percent of Total Acres of Owned Land in Farms in CA by Producer Demographic (2022)





Return ancestral lands to California Tribal Nations

Recommendations

Full list of recommendations



Return ancestral lands to California Tribal Nations



Recognize and remove barriers to sovereignty of California Tribal Nations

The State of California was founded on the violent removal, coercion, murder, intimidation, and attempted extermination of California Native Americans. Governor Newsom's apology, issued in 2019 (Executive Order N-15-19), recognizes that the State of California "sanctioned over a century of depredations and prejudicial policies against California Native Americans." This order, along with land acknowledgements and similar statements, are the early steps of a much longer and broader process to address historical injustices that persist today.

Federally recognized California Tribes currently hold 635,739 acres, less than 1% of the state, in reservation lands.¹⁹ An additional approximately 12,635 total acres of land in California have been returned to twelve of the 110 federally recognized tribes and more than 80 tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission list since 1995. In 2024, CNRA's Tribal Nature Based Solutions Program awarded grants to 33 Tribal Nations to support the return of roughly 38,950 acres of land. While this work is a valuable step in the right direction, many California Tribal Nations are landless or on very small parcels.²⁰

One such injustice is the loss of Tribal land through allotment. The General Allotment Act (Dawes Act), passed by Congress in 1887, authorized the division of Tribal land into allotments for Tribal individuals and families, which were normally between 40 and 160

acres. If reservation land exceeded that needed for allotment, "excess land" could be sold to non-Tribal individuals. Often, the most productive land was deemed "excess."²¹ Additionally, the Act allowed Tribal landowners to sell or lease their land once 25 years had passed since the issuance of the allotment, and numerous legislative amendments made it easier to transfer land to non-Tribal individuals.

Overall, allotment resulted in the loss of roughly 90 million acres of land from Tribal control, and numerous other challenges persist today as a result of allotment, including checkerboard-like ownership of land, lost access to sacred sites, fractionation

21. Indian Land Tenure Foundation. <https://iltf.org/land-issues/history/>



19. Plachta, Ari. 2022. Gavin Newsom said he would give land back to Native Americans in California. Has he? www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/article264454331.html#storylink=cpy

20. Plachta, Ari. 2022. Gavin Newsom said he would give land back to Native Americans in California. Has he? www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/article264454331.html#storylink=cpy



RETURN ANCESTRAL LANDS TO CALIFORNIA TRIBAL NATIONS

through transfer to multiple heirs, and lack of access to land that is “landlocked,” meaning surrounded by privately held land.

The persistent land access challenges arising from allotment and other forms of land theft and exclusion require a cohesive response from the State. The recommendations that follow are intended to complement CNRA’s Tribal Stewardship Strategy and the Truth and Healing Council’s Report and further the commitments in Governor Newsom’s Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands.

Return state-owned lands to Tribal Nations

Transfer Ancestral Lands To Tribal Nations Without Restrictions

1. Establish and fund a Tribal State Lands Commission comprised of regionally diverse delegates of federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Tribal Nations.
 - a. Establish and fund a new state program designed to purchase and return ancestral land
 - b. Require that the Commission advise and oversee the creation of a statewide goal for acres of land returned to California Tribal Nations.
 - c. In collaboration with local and state agencies, require the Commission to identify surplus land and establish pathways for land return
4. Ensure Tribal Nations do not need to create alternative entities, such as non-profits, nor purchase the land at fair-market value.
 - a. Address and update current policies and regulations, including the Surplus Land Act, that prohibit direct land transition.
 - b. Require state agencies to transfer land

directly to Tribal Nations, without the need for a third-party intermediary such as a land trust, through a specified process and within a consistent timeframe.

- c. Establish a right of first refusal process that provides Tribal Nations the access and opportunity to accept publicly held land at zero or minimal cost.
- d. If collaboration with a third party is required, prioritize partnerships with Tribal-led and serving organizations and community-based organizations that practice cultural humility.

Expand land access and return opportunities for California Tribal Nations

1. Provide financial and technical assistance and legal aid to Tribal Nations working to convert fee land to trust land.
2. Increase funding to existing programs that support ancestral land return, acquisition, and co-management projects, such as the California Natural Resources Conservation Agency’s Tribal Nature Based Solutions program.
3. Incentivize land trusts and private individuals to transfer land to Tribal Nations. See recommendations on land trusts and tax incentives below for the specific pathways to achieve this objective.
4. Coordinate with federal agencies to support the return of federally owned lands to Tribal Nations.



RETURN ANCESTRAL LANDS TO CALIFORNIA TRIBAL NATIONS

Case Study Example

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ALETF Meetings

Meeting Dates in 2025	Location	Topics, Presenters, Materials
August 13 & 14	Blue Lake Rancheria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and discuss August Draft
October 15 & 16	Ventura	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and discuss October Draft (final draft)
November 13	Berkeley	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalize report text
December 11	Sacramento	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve final report for submission

ALETF Timeline Aug - Oct

	Aug 11-15	Aug 18-22	Aug 25-29	Sep 1 - 5	Sep 8-12	Sep 15-19	Sep 22-26	Sep 29- Oct 3	Oct 6-10	Oct 13-17
August Meeting - Arcata										
Staff Revise Report										
Subcommittees										
Working Groups										
Staff Revise Report										
TF Review Report										
October Meeting - Ventura										

Work Planning and Next Steps

Next steps and deadlines

- 8/22: Task Force members submit remaining comments to staff
- 9/2 – 9/5: Subcommittees meet
- 9/8 – 9/26: Working groups meet
- 10/3: Staff send October 2025 Draft Report to Task Force

Work Planning and Next Steps

Assign membership

Working Groups

- **Emily + Thea**
 - Interagency Feedback
 - Coastal Indigenous Aquaculture
- **Nelson + James**
 - Tone and Consistency Review + Engagement Insights (x2)
- **Doria + Nathaniel**
 - Urban Ag

Subcommittees

- Goal 1: Lawrence, Emily
- Goal 2: Dorian, Nathaniel, Thea
- Goal 3: Doria, Qi, James, Thea, Irene
- Goal 4: James, Ruth, Irene
- Restorative Land: Doria, Thea, Irene, Lawrence

Work Planning and Next Steps

Final Meeting (Dec 11)

- Vote to approve submission of the report
- What are your goals for this meeting?
- Who do you want to invite to this meeting?

Public Comment

Re: Working Session

Public Comment Process

IN PERSON

- Submit the public comment card on the front table
- Separate form for each item
- Listen for your name and line up by the podium
- Staff will call your name to the podium
- Please adhere to **2-minute** time limit

VIRTUAL

- Complete form at sgc.ca.gov/meetings-events
- Separate form for each item
- Listen for your name and “raise your hand” on Zoom
- Staff will unmute your microphone
- Please adhere to **2-minute** time limit

General Public Comment

Public Comment Process

IN PERSON

- Submit the public comment card on the front table
- Separate form for each item
- Listen for your name and line up by the podium
- Staff will call your name to the podium
- Please adhere to **2-minute** time limit

VIRTUAL

- Complete form at sgc.ca.gov/meetings-events
- Separate form for each item
- Listen for your name and “raise your hand” on Zoom
- Staff will unmute your microphone
- Please adhere to **2-minute** time limit

Summarize, Action Items, Next Steps

- Summary of Actions taken
- Review of Action Items and follow up items
- Meeting notes, recording, and materials posted to:

<https://sgc.ca.gov/meetings/caletf/>

Thank You!