



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

To: California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Members
From: Erin Curtis, SGC Executive Director
Re: **Executive Director Report to the Council – Aug. 27, 2025**

Staffing Updates

- Jessica McCool will transition to the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) as part of the CA 5th Climate Assessment program.
- Melissa Moyce joined SGC as Energy Policy Specialist for SGC's Energy Investment portfolio.
- Brianne Logasa has been promoted to Resilient Community Senior Planner for SGC's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program.
- Jessica Ison has been promoted to Resilient Community Senior Planner for SGC's Transformative Climate Communities program.
- Dora Monterroza has been promoted to Resilient Community Senior Planner for SGC's Community Resilience Centers program.
- Jessica Cervantes has been promoted to Resilient Community Senior Planner for SGC's Community Resilience Centers program.

Investment Program Updates

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Marc Caswell, Shep Wilbun, Justin DeWaele, Brianne Logasa, Ella Manashil and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Staff

- On June 13, SGC leadership and staff attended the ribbon cutting for a new Sonoma-Marin Rail Transit (SMART) Station. This new train station was funded by AHSC as part of Round 5's Casa Roseland Village, extending the SMART rail network 3.1 miles to reach the town of Windsor, expanding the reach of the regional commuter rail line that connects Sonoma and Marin Counties to the broader Bay Area.
- On July 11, SGC staff attended the ribbon cutting for Escalante Meadows, a Round 6 awarded project to expand housing in the city of Guadalupe. Escalante Meadows is a redevelopment and expansion of an older affordable housing development and received \$19,375,180 from AHSC to support 80 affordable homes, new bikeways, bus improvements, and electric vehicle charging stations.
- Applicants for AHSC Round 9 submitted their applications by the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) submission deadline of May 28. AHSC received 46 valid applications from across the state. 20 applications are located within disadvantaged communities, three have utilized factory-built housing components, and there is one homeownership project.
 - AHSC staff completed the first phase of review, threshold review, for all applications during the week of Aug. 4. The second phase of review – scoring – is

now underway with staff from SGC, HCD, and CARB. The initial scoring notifications are set to go to applicants in approximately 30 days, with all scoring planned to be completed in October. Awards for AHSC Round 9 are set to take place at the December 2025 SGC Council Meeting.

- The Narrative Review process has also begun. Interagency reviewers from eight different agencies are currently in project review.

Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Nicole Cartwright, Sarah Newsham, Jess Ison, Chynell Freeman, Noni Ifyefobi, Joyce Tse and Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff

- Staff continue to process advance pay requests and provide assistance to Round 4 and Round 5 grantees as authorized by AB 156 (2022), AB 590 (2023) and AB 3017 (2024). To date, staff have processed eight advance pay requests.
- Staff are revising the Program Guidelines and application materials in anticipation of Proposition 4 funding, including coordination with the Community Resilience Center and Extreme Heat programs.
- TCC hosted a virtual gathering for grantees to support peer-to-peer learning on the topic of community engagement.
- TCC convened the second Grantee Feedback Work Group meeting to gather feedback and input from current grantees.
- Staff have attended several site visits including:
 - The TCC team, along with other SGC and DOC staff members, attended a site visit and strategic planning session in Ontario, a Round 1 Implementation Grant.
 - Sarah Newsham and Chynell Freeman attended the Catalyst Convening in San José to gather feedback on the upcoming Program Guidelines.
 - Sarah Newsham attended the Stockton Rising Annual Summit, a Round 4 Implementation Grant.
 - Joyce Tse and Melinda Kelley attended the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District kickoff, a Round 5 Project Development Grant.
 - Joyce Tse and Melinda Kelley attended an All-Partners meeting at the city of Riverside, a Round 3 Implementation Grant.
- Staff also spoke at the following event:
 - May 15: Sarah Newsham, Senior Planner, spoke to participants in the Rising Environmental Leaders Program of the Stanford Woods Institute as part of a panel discussion, “Local Climate Adaptation Strategies – Creating Community Resilience and Equity.”

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Shanna Atherton-Bauer DOC and DOC Staff

- The SALC Planning and Capacity grant application windows closed on July 3, 2025. SALC received four planning applications and 20 capacity applications totaling approximately \$5 million in requests.

- The SALC Acquisition application window closed July 17, 2025. SALC received 56 easement applications and 18 fee acquisition applications totaling approximately \$216.4 million to conserve more than 61,000 acres of irrigated agricultural lands, grazing lands, and lands that support tribal cultural uses. Of the projects submitted, ten were submitted by tribes and three by tribal-serving organizations. Staff are reviewing all projects and plan to bring project recommendations to the October Council meeting for consideration.
- Staff reported seven easements closing between April 8 and Aug. 4. These projects have conserved 5,712 acres of irrigated and grazing land across five counties.
- Between April 8 and Aug. 4, SALC staff submitted 73 invoices totaling \$8.98 million to DOC Accounting for payment. This includes six acquisition invoices, payments for associated costs related to acquisition transactions, payments for capacity and project work, and payments for planning work.

Community Resilience Centers (CRC)

Staff: Amar Cid, Anna Jane Jones, Dora Monterroza, Jessica Cervantes, Jess McCool and Jin Zhang

- The CRC Program has successfully executed all 24 Round 1 CRC Grants including 11 Planning Grants, four Project Development Grants, and nine Implementation Grants.
- Staff and the CRC Implementation Technical Assistance Provider team led capacity building trainings for grantees on invoicing, advance pay, and procurement. In response to grantee feedback collected from the May 2025 CRC Grantee Needs Assessment Survey, staff are developing new trainings for grantees on partnership agreements and on coordination for emergency preparedness and operations planning.
- Staff continue to process advance pay requests and provide assistance for Round 1 grantees as authorized by AB 590 (2024). To date, staff have submitted three advance pay requests.
- Staff are collaborating with the TCC team, Extreme Heat and other relevant state programs in anticipation of Proposition 4 funding. Staff are working closely with SGC's TCC Program to research and develop better funding practices, develop an outreach and communications strategy, and align timelines for the next grant cycle. As a result of this work, CRC and TCC staff released the "SGC Proposed Application Process and Prop 4 Update" on June 19 with a request for feedback to inform updates to the next round of program guidelines.

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

Staff: Hoi-Fei Mok, Ena Lupine, Blanca Escobedo, Markie Price and Nancy Cheng

- **Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Program:** Staff is working with the RCC Implementation Technical Assistance contractor team to plan for the remaining peer learning sessions for RCC grantees and partners. Staff is also planning an in-person RCC Fall Convening November 5-6 in Rancho Cucamonga. This event will bring the grantees



together one last time before the end of their grant terms in 2026 to share how they have built capacity in their respective regions and identify strategies to keep the collaboratives active after their grant term ends.

- **Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program:** Staff are scheduling site visits for grantees. SGC Executive Director Erin Curtis, CA Energy Commissioner Noemi Gallardo, SGC staff, and representatives from CalFire and CA Ocean Protection Council attended the yak tityu yak tithini Northern Chumash Tribe site visit on June 30 in Morro Bay. The trip included a tour of their aquaculture site and an update on their land back fundraising. Two grantees will be speaking on a SGC facilitated tribal panel at the upcoming American Planning Association’s annual conference in Monterey in September.
- **BOOST:** SGC has taken over primary coordination for the Imperial Valley Civic Ecosystem Initiative. This includes facilitating greater partnership between Institute for Local Government and Latino Community Foundation, working with Freedman Consulting on strategic direction, and launching a new quarterly newsletter that will provide updates on state initiatives and their impact in the Imperial Valley and the broader Salton Sea region. This newsletter will share state agency programs, investments, and key milestones with local, state and philanthropic partners to raise awareness of the state’s work in the region and opportunities for collaboration and alignment. The newsletter will also highlight SGC’s Imperial Valley Civic Ecosystem Initiative, sharing program updates from the initiative’s implementing partners – the Institute for Local Government and Latino Community Foundation – about their impact on the ground.
- **Tribal Housing and Capacity Building Program:** Staff are conducting key informant interviews to inform development of program guidelines.
- **Interagency Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Work Group:** The CACE team facilitates a regular interagency work group to share best practices across agencies related to offering technical assistance and capacity building support to California communities. In June, the work group welcomed a large group of new participants who are working on developing technical assistance for Proposition 4 climate bond-funded programs.

Collaborative Policy Initiatives

Health and Equity Program (HEP)

Staff: Hoi-Fei Mok, Fabián Pérez-Gove, Michael Jimenez, Mahima Ali

Health in All Policies (HiAP)

Staff: SGC partners with California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the State of Equity to staff the HiAP Task Force. The Task Force brings together over 30 agencies, departments and commissions to integrate health into programs and policies that advance state priorities.

- **HiAP Evaluation and Key-Informant Interviews.** In early Spring 2025, HEP led an internal evaluation of HiAP that included key informant interviews, surveys and listening sessions with task force members. Members provided input on the structure, priorities



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of HiAP, and recommendations for future work. In June, HEP finalized the evaluation report and the findings will be used to develop deliverables and action plans for HiAP in 2026.

- **HiAP Task Force hosted quarterly interagency convening.** On June 11, HEP and HiAP partners hosted an in-person HiAP Task Force Quarterly Meeting in Sacramento. During the meeting, HEP discussed HiAP evaluation results and Racial Equity Commission staff shared their progress and collected feedback on the Racial Equity Framework. HEP and HiAP partners hosted a virtual HiAP Task Force Quarterly Meeting on Aug. 13 which included two guest presenters. The guest presenters were the California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo who shared their California's Urban Tree Strategic Plan and LCI who presented updates on California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment.
- **HiAP hosts Safe & Equitable Communities Roundtable.** On July 22, HEP and State of Equity hosted the HiAP Safe & Equitable Communities Roundtable. The Roundtable is part of HiAP and focuses on public health and violence prevention. Guest presenters from the former White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention and GIFFORDS Law Center discussed coordination efforts across sectors at the federal level for gun violence prevention. The group shared existing coalition building in California and opportunities for further collaboration.
- **Global Health in All Policies Survey.** On behalf of the HiAP Task Force, HEP submitted a response to the Global Health in All Policies survey. This survey, administered by Global Network for Health in All Policies, gathered information on HiAP initiatives around the world. HEP's response highlighted Task Force efforts over the last five years (with references to work since its establishment in 2010). Participation in this survey ensures the California HiAP Task Force continues to be tracked alongside global HiAP initiatives.
- **Contract for Health in All Policies Action Planning.** In July, HEP signed an 18-month contract with the Equity and Wellness Institute (EqWI) to continue the evaluation of HiAP and develop a recommendation report with action plans for the HiAP working groups. EqWI will also review the grant implementation evaluation tool developed for state partners, in alignment with Council Priority 2 on technical assistance and capacity building. EqWI will develop implementation materials on the grant evaluation tool and will provide a workshop series on best practices in contracting.

Organizational Initiatives

- **Workforce Experience Survey.** In May, HEP administered an anonymous survey for SGC staff to share their workplace experiences. The survey was intended to help SGC Leadership understand the culture of the organization and staff experiences. A total of 22 staff participated, and survey findings were kept internal to SGC and will be used to develop recommendations on how to improve the experience of all staff.

Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE)

Staff: SGC partners with the Public Health Institute's (PHI) State of Equity program to host a program for California State government institutions and employees to learn how to make government processes and resources more accessible and transparent. CCORE brings together agencies, departments, boards and offices to build a people-power movement inside of California State government.

- **CCORE Transformative Leadership Cohort – 2025 Closeout**
 - CCORE's Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC) focuses on the experiences of government workers of various backgrounds over a period of 7 months to better serve all Californians. State and community organizations come together to learn how to help their departments become places where all staff feel welcomed. The TLC will close out with an in-person session hosted in Sacramento in September.

Natural and Working Lands*California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force*

Staff: Sean Kennedy, Camille Frazier, Tessa Salzman and Caleb Swanson

- The eighth California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force meeting occurred May 14-15 at the Susanville Indian Rancheria. The Task Force members reviewed and discussed their draft report. During the meeting, Task Force members established working groups to continue refining their recommendations in advance of the August meeting.
- Since May, Agricultural Land Equity Initiative (ALEI) staff and Task Force members have organized and co-hosted extensive community engagement that focused on the May and June 2025 Draft Reports and attendees' experiences with land access:
 - May 13: ALEI staff and Task Force members hosted a hybrid tribal engagement Session at Susanville Indian Rancheria with Tribal Leaders and representatives from northern California Tribes. Also in attendance were SGC Executive Director Erin Curtis and LCI Tribal Liaison Rico Miranda
 - May 22: Presentation at the California Department of Food & Agriculture's Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer Advisory Committee meeting
 - June 3: Sent Tribal Leader Letter to federally and non-federally recognized tribal nations in California inviting engagement with the Task Force's Draft Report
 - June 24: Presentation at the Tribal Energy & Climate Collaborative eXchange (TECC-X) meeting
 - July 15-16: Engagement Sessions with Kern County Black Farmers Association, Allensworth Progressive Association and African American Farmers of California
 - July 22: Meeting with Greater San Diego Resource Conservation District farmers
 - July 23: Tribal Engagement Session with the Mesa Grande Band of Pomo Indians at Golden Eagle Farm
 - July 30: Engagement Session with Project MILPA - Líderes Campesinas, Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)
 - Aug. 1: Presentation at California Native American Tribal GIS Summit 2025



- The Community Outreach Subcommittee and Grants & Resources Subcommittee met in May and June, respectively. Members discussed work updates and considered language for the Draft Report.
- The AB 524 Subcommittee met in June and voted to submit position letters to Senate committees. A member submitted a letter of support on behalf of the Subcommittee to the Senate Agriculture Committee on July 8 and the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 29.
- The August 2025 Draft Report was shared with interagency reviewers on July 31 and ALEI hosted an optional kick-off Zoom call on Aug. 4. Interagency reviewers will provide feedback on the draft report through Aug. 28. ALEI staff will then consolidate and anonymize feedback to share with the Task Force for its consideration.
- On Aug. 20, ALEI staff will host two virtual Town Halls for members of the public to hear an update on the Task Force's work and share feedback on the Draft Report. The virtual meetings are open to the public and staff have sent personalized invitations to individuals who have engaged with the Task Force in the past, including site visit hosts and guest speakers.
- The ninth Task Force meeting is scheduled for Aug. 13 & 14 at the Blue Lake Rancheria. The Task Force members will review and discuss the revised draft report, hear an update on outreach and engagement activities, and plan final steps to meet the Jan. 1 deadline.
 - On Aug. 12, the day prior to the Task Force meeting, members and staff will host a hybrid Tribal Engagement Session with California Native American tribes in the north coast region.
 - After the meeting ends on Aug. 13, Task Force members and staff will visit one of three farms in the region: Two coordinated through the North Coast Growers Association one at the Blue Lake Rancheria community garden and ranch.

Federal Funding Initiatives

Connecting Communities

Staff: Adrienne Moretz

- **Technical Assistance:** Connecting Communities is supporting previous SGC grant applicants and awardees to apply to and receive federal grants. The team is supporting communities with executed federal agreements to maintain grant compliance and is sharing available resources more broadly to communities who have submitted federal applications.
- **Catalyst Convenings:** SGC Connecting Communities team, with LCI, hosted a regional Catalyst Convening in early July for the San Francisco Bay Area. Nearly 150 regional leaders from local, regional and state government, philanthropy, non-profit, and higher education attended the event. The events are a continuation of the commitments made at the 2023 and 2024 Catalyst Conferences. Additional events will be planned in the coming months.

The goals of the Convenings are to:

- Understand the bioregion and explore specific regional issues
- Facilitate two-way conversations on climate, land use and energy
- Enable regions to have space to inform and co-create policies with actionable recommendations
- Create opportunities for state agencies and program teams to share funding, incentives, opportunities to engage, and other resources available to the region

SGC and LCI will be posting updates on SGCcatalyst.org, including event summaries and regional background reports.

SF Bay Area Region

- [Convening Summary](#)
- [Regional Overview](#)

Energy Investments

Factory-Built Housing (FBH) Pre-Development Pilot Program

Staff: Sean Kennedy and Kenna Davis

- On April 27, the SGC Council adopted a revised resolution to support energy-efficient FBH to meet the State's housing, climate and equity goals (25-01). The resolution directs SGC staff to develop a modified pilot program that provides funding to support the expansion of FBH in California in ways that meet the State's housing and climate goals.
- The modified pilot program builds on the work done during two previous rounds of funding availability and was redesigned to focus on action at the regional and local level to enable and scale the deployment of FBH. Guidelines have been developed and edited to reflect other successful SGC and State of California grant programs and current and anticipated SGC grant administration capacity.
- The revised guidelines for the SGC Factory-built Housing Pilot Program will be released for a 30-day public comment on Aug. 29. This period will include two public webinars to collect comments and targeted outreach to regional entities to promote the program and collect additional feedback on the guidelines.

Proposition 4 - Climate Bond

- Proposition 4 – Climate Bond was approved by voters in November 2024. In the bond, TCC and CRC are approved for legislative appropriation. TCC is authorized to receive up to \$150 million and CRC \$60 million. The Agricultural Land Equity Task Force is also named to work in consultation with DOC on the administration of \$30 million to improve land access and tenure for disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, tribal producers, and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- LCI and SGC are working closely with the Department of Finance (DOF), California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the Governor's Office (GO) as we progress through this budget year to develop the program funding rounds.



- CNRA is continuing to convene the Climate Bond Core Team that SGC staff participate in. SGC offered its existing Technical Assistance Work Group for Climate Bond participants interested in technical assistance and has facilitated two work groups so far with additional participants. SGC collaborated with CNRA to develop a technical assistance survey to better understand what needs are and if a cross-programmatic technical assistance program is suitable.

News Media Clips

SGC

- [“California Strategic Growth Council Approves New Initiative to Support Tribes’ Efforts to Build Capacity in Affordable Housing”](#) (SGC Press Release, May 8, 2025) SGC members voted on key aspects of the AHSC program and other housing initiatives that will increase access and delivery of affordable housing funding across the state.
- [“California has funded more than 22,000 transit-oriented homes through cap-and-trade alone”](#) (SGC Press Release, June 13, 2025) California’s AHSC Program is marking the investment of more than \$4 billion in cap-and-trade funds, which has added more than 22,000 affordable homes in climate-friendly communities statewide.
- [“South Fresno TCC Project Recognized by U.S. EPA as Transformative Brownfields Redevelopment”](#) (SGC Press Release, Aug. 1, 2025) Celebrating the recognition of a Round 1 funded project by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for being a successful Brownfields redevelopment in southwest Fresno.

AHSC

- [“80 Affordable Housing Units in Guadalupe Represent Inspirational Local Family”](#) (KEYT, July 11, 2025) Article on the Escalante Meadows ribbon-cutting in Guadalupe.
- [“Big moment for a small city: New affordable housing community officially opens”](#) (SGC, July 31, 2025) Blog post on the Escalante Meadows ribbon-cutting in Guadalupe.

TCC

- [“Local climate champions build a resilient future during tumultuous times”](#) (Luskin Center for Innovation, July 31, 2025) New UCLA research shows how California’s TCC program empowers residents.
- [“South Fresno TCC Project Recognized by U.S. EPA as Transformative Brownfields Redevelopment”](#) (SGC, Aug. 1, 2025) TCC Round 1 project recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for being a successful Brownfields redevelopment in southwest Fresno.



California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

- [“Evelyn Young, owner of Amor Backyard Farm, joined 23ABC to talk about the Ag Land Equity Task Force”](#) (July 14, ABC 23). A Bakersfield TV program that interviews the co-host of an Agricultural Land Equity Task Force about a listening session on July 15 in Bakersfield. The conversation begins with a brief discussion about the Task Force and its goals. The listening session was attended by ALEI staff and two Task Force members and focused on attendees’ experiences with land access and feedback on the Draft Report.

