

Oct. 8, 2025

Subject: California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Aug. 27, 2025 – Meeting Minutes

Reporting Period: August 2025 – October 2025

Staff Lead: Lisa Duong, Administrative Associate, SGC

Recommended Action

Approval of the Aug. 27, 2025, SGC Meeting Minutes.

SGC Aug. 27, 2025 – Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Vice Chair Cárdenas called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

Frank Cárdenas, Vice Chair, Public Member

Yana Garcia, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Chancellor, Public Member

Abby Edwards (Designee), Senior Deputy Director, on behalf of Director Sam Assefa, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

Daniel Torres (Designee), Chief Equity Officer, California Health and Human Services Agency, on behalf of Secretary Kim Johnson

Darwin Moosavi (Designee), Deputy Secretary, on behalf of Secretary Toks Omishakin, California State Transportation Agency

Sasha Kergan, Deputy Secretary, on behalf of Secretary Tomiquia Moss, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency

Thea Rittenhouse (Designee), Farm Equity Advisor, on behalf of Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

Noaki Schwartz (Designee), Deputy Secretary, Equity and Environmental Justice, on behalf of Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency; (Virtual)

Council Members and Representatives Absent:

Nicole Capretz, Public Member

Quorum met; 9/10 members present

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Approval of Aug. 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Council Comment

No Council discussion.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motion passes (8-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Motion was made by Garcia and seconded by Muñoz.

Agenda Item #4: Executive Director's Report

Erin Curtis, Executive Director, SGC

Secretary Garcia left the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Yvonne Chi (Designee), Deputy Secretary, CalEPA, on behalf of Secretary Yana Garcia, present the whole duration of the meeting, assumed their role as designee. Quorum met; 9/10 members present.

Council Comment

At the start of the Executive Director's report, Secretary Garcia spoke in remembrance of Sabine Talaugon, CalEPA Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Relations. Vice Chair Cárdenas thanked her for the tribute.

Muñoz: Commented on the conservation easement through the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) program and supported the efforts in the work to preserve the land that are at risk of development.

Cárdenas: Appreciated the breadth of the work showcased in the Executive Director's report. Encouraged everyone in the audience to read through the report. Thanked the staff for their efforts in keeping this work moving forward.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #5: ACTION: Consent Calendar

Motion to move the Consent Calendar

a. SALC: Guidelines Technical Amendment

Erin Curtis, Executive Director, SGC

Council Comment

No Council discussion.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Motion passes (9-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Motion was made by Kergan and seconded by Muñoz.

Agenda Item #6: INFORMATIONAL*Connecting Communities Initiative Update*

Adrienne Moretz, Special Advisor of Innovation & Partnerships, SGC

Dr. Amy Lerman, UC Berkeley Possibility Lab

Hannah Jackson, UC Berkeley Possibility Lab

Council Comment

Edwards: Appreciated hearing about the Connecting Communities Initiative and all the statistics provided. Inquired about the first goal and working with communities that were impacted by the federal cuts. Is there any philanthropic support that fills in the gaps in the opportunities that are available?

Moretz: Explained that there has been direct and indirect support from philanthropy, which is especially true when philanthropy stepped in to support some of the grants that lost funding through some of the programs. Further explained that on the capacity building side, philanthropy is more interested in partnership and how to work together rather than backfilling funds.

Muñoz: Appreciated the continued use and acknowledgement of diverse opinions and representation.

Kergan: Commended the team for their resilience and the accountability of still staying connected to the goals despite the changing federal landscape. Will be helpful to stay connected and supportive as the team navigates this changing environment. Asked if there is an opportunity to look at the gap analysis of different stakeholders not in the room, and if there are any tools or models to scan for voices that could be absent. Acknowledged that changes at the federal level and government employees' access to community spaces will be different.

Lerman: Explained that one of the goals of the impact model is to be an iterative process and show value, to think about how to do a better job at bringing people in and make it as easy as possible for people to engage without the presence of stakeholders, and to build trust with the community. Commended the Council for making the convenings accessible for people and not having to travel so far.

Torres: Appreciated the technical assistance provided despite the federal funding cuts. Recognized the changes and observed the distrust in government. Mentioned how the ripple effects may impact our own work as part of state government. Expressed interest in hearing more about a long-term process to collect data and think about how to reconcile and heal from all of this.

Cárdenas: Thanked the team and encouraged them to continue the inspiring work as strongly as possible.

Public Comment

Lora O'Connor, Inspired Collaborations

Agenda Item #7: DISCUSSION

California For All Panel

- *Showcasing Impacts of State Investments in Communities*

Hoi-Fei Mok, Deputy Director of Equity & Government Transformation, SGC

Martha Ramirez, Practitioner Panelist, El Tímpano

Malena Data Ernani, Practitioner Panelist, El Tímpano

Esther Bejerano, Practitioner Panelist, Comité Cívico del Valle

Cesar Aguirre, Practitioner Panelist, Central California Environmental Justice Network

Larissa Estes, State Representative Panelist, Racial Equity Commission

Dr. Ashley Kissinger, State Representative Panelist, California Department of Public Health

Shyenne Lewis, State Representative Panelist, California Department of Resource Recycling and Recovery

Deputy Secretary Schwartz left the meeting at 2:39 p.m. Quorum met; 8/10 members present.

Deputy Secretary Moosavi left the meeting at 2:57 p.m. Quorum met; 7/10 members present.

Chancellor Muñoz left at 3:01 p.m. Quorum met; 6/10 members present.

Chancellor Muñoz returned to the meeting at 3:03 p.m. Quorum met; 7/10 members present.

Council Comment

Torres: Acknowledged the works of the panelists and how important it is to uplift the community and partners, and to make that visible for all of state workforce. Mentioned his eye-opening experience working on a project last year with community health workers.

Muñoz: Echoed the comment made by Kergan regarding “gap analysis” in the previous agenda item. Inquired if there are ways to support groups that are experiencing a retreat of available resources, or ways to backfill funds. Expressed his willingness to find ways to support the panelists.

Edwards: Appreciated the panelists for sharing their stories. Expressed interest in thinking and being creative in pooling funds from different types of pots.

Chi: Thanked the panelists for telling their stories and teaching us ways that the government can work best to build healthier communities. Recognized the importance of building trust and support for communities and the time it takes to build it. Expressed interest in hearing the panelists’ insight on their

experiences over the decades throughout many different administrations that have been challenging, and the types of strategies they are adopting to protect members of their communities.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #8: DISCUSSION***SGC Proposition 4 Program and Technical Assistance***

- *Program Implementation and Proposed Timeline Adjustment*
- *Proposition 4 Technical Assistance*

Amar Cid, Deputy Director of Community Investments & Planning, SGC

Hoi-Fei Mok, Deputy Director of Equity & Government Transformation, SGC

Senior Deputy Director Edwards left at 3:33 p.m. Quorum met; 6/10 members present.

Senior Deputy Director Edwards returned to the meeting at 3:38 p.m. Quorum met; 7/10 members present.

Council Comment

Rittenhouse: Mentioned her extensive involvement in CDFA technical assistance programs. Cited all the good suggestions mentioned during the panel from the previous agenda item and will consider additional factors such as language support and public engagement and outreach, and attention to safety.

Torres: Mirrored Rittenhouse's comments and articulated the importance of bringing these topics into earlier conversations.

Edwards: Appreciated the tracked changes provided and lessons learned. Mentioned the importance of avoiding engagement fatigue when consulting the public, but excited for the team to roll out this program.

Kergan: Expressed interest in seeing the difference between existing and future processes. Echoed Edwards' comment on engagement fatigue and working on ways to decrease barriers to participation by drawing upon collective expertise and do better government in the process. Suggested building into template models things that have been reflected on and were discussed earlier in the meeting.

Cárdenas: Congratulated the team for rolling out the program and understanding that the pre-development phase is a meaningful part of the actual implementation.

Public Comment

Lora O'Connor, Inspired Collaborations

Agenda Item #9: Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #10: Meeting Adjournment

Deputy Secretary Chi motioned to adjourn the meeting in remembrance of Sabine Talaugon, seconded by Chancellor Muñoz.

Motion passes (7-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

