

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Goal 1: Tribal Stewardship & Land
Return Subcommittee

September 16, 2025 | 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.



Participation Guidelines



**Share,
Listen, Learn**



**Respect Different
Perspectives**



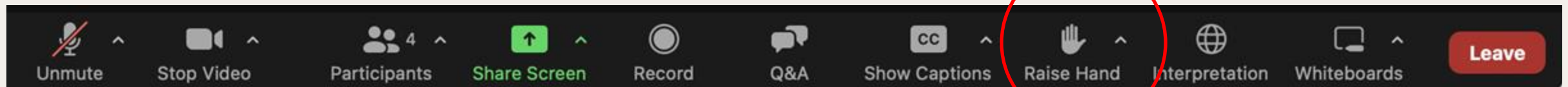
Stay on Point

Public Comment Process

- 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

Zoom Tips

- All participants are **muted** upon entry.
 - You will be unmuted when it is your time to speak.
 - Please remember to mute yourself after speaking.
- Cameras are optional.
- Use “Raise Hand” feature during public comment periods.



Agenda Review

- **Welcome**
- **Working Session**
 - Review of feedback received on Goal 1 since August ALETF meeting
 - Review and discuss draft goal and subgoals
 - Review action items. Assign follow-up tasks and deadlines
- **General Public Comment**

Working Session

Working Session

To consider:

- Order of recommendations
- Scope and level of detail

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Revisions

Requested revision	Status
Include case studies	In progress: 1) Golden Eagle Farm fee to trust
Add list of federally recognized Tribal Nations, including Modoc Nation of Oklahoma, with total acreage and membership	In progress; membership data?
Small track changes & organization	Complete
Specify actor in 1.2.c	Complete – made note at top of document about implied actor if not specified

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Revisions

Requested revision	Status
1.3a: Specify "culturally meaningful ways"; expand on why cultural fire is called out; make sure tribes have a voice in designing what this means	Complete
1.3a: Ensure stable funding for the intergenerational transfer of land-based knowledge, ensuring cultural stewardship practices are carried forward. [Community input]	Complete
1.3d: Expand to include, "protect CA Tribal cultural landscapes and practices." Give examples like traditional food groves, watersheds, ceremonial sites	Complete
Define federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes; Revise use of "sovereignty" throughout report to only refer to "Tribal sovereignty"	Complete

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1.1.b

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.

Input

- Should Commission be state-run? Is this an appropriate mechanism/platform? [Aug. Mtg]
- Concerns re: how to establish this body, implementation challenges, etc.
- It would need to be created by legislation and would require significant funding; possible limitations related to State policies, laws, regulations, and procedures; could lead to intertribal conflict [Interagency]
 - **Discussion:** Is this the right format and entity to do this work?
- Include a land return process with clear timelines, performance metrics, and accountability requirements; Specify minimum # delegates & timeline for its creation [Community]
 - **Discussion:** Do you want to specify this level of detail?

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1.1.b

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.

Input:

- Create a permanent Tribal Land Equity Advisory Council, tasked with guiding implementation of recommendations, advising on evolving needs, and ensuring accountability over time. [Community]
 - **Discussion:**
 - Is this recommendation aligned with 1.1.b Tribal Lands Return Commission? Add detail?

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1.1.d

1.1.d: Implement a right of first refusal process across all state agencies that provides Tribal Nations the access and opportunity to accept publicly held ancestral lands at zero or minimal cost when agencies sell or get rid of land.

3.3 Develop first opportunity to purchase ordinances

- a) Fund a coalition of local and regional organizations to develop culturally and regionally informed first opportunity to purchase ordinances for adoption by local governments.
- b) California Tribal Nations should be prioritized for acquisition of their ancestral lands.
- c) Create a fund to respond to the opportunity to purchase when land becomes available.

Discussion [Aug. Mtg]

- Does right of first refusal (ROFR) apply to public and/or private land?
- How to address potential of ROFR to pit Tribal Nations against other priority producers?
 - ROFR for Tribal Nations followed by first opportunity to purchase ordinance

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1.1.a

1.1.a Transfer ancestral lands to Tribal Nations free from restrictions and encumbrances.

Input [Interagency]:

- Add text to the overview section that explains community support for: "free from restrictions and encumbrances"
- Remove "free from restrictions and encumbrances" from 1.1.a

Possible paths forward:

1. Remove "free from restrictions and encumbrances" and add to overview section
2. Update rec to acknowledge and address constitutional barriers
 - e.g. "Identify and amend relevant constitutional barriers to allow the transfer of ancestral lands to Tribal Nations free from restrictions and encumbrances."

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Community Input

Issue to discuss	Possible solution
Explore an alternative state-recognized “third option” in place of fee and trust land that better reflects Tribal sovereignty and Tribal Nations’ relationships with land.	Needs legal review. Who would need to be involved in creating the new option? Next steps?
Create a state recognition process for Tribal Nations to access programs, resources, and protections.	What would this process look like? What is best approach?

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Terminology & definitions

- **Change Tribal Nation to California Native American Tribes [Interagency review]**
- **Federally recognized California Tribal Nation:** An American Indian Tribal entity which has ancestral lands within the geographic boundaries of present-day California and is recognized by the federal United States government as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Federally recognized California Tribal Nations possess certain inherent rights of self-government.
- **Non-federally recognized California Tribal Nation:** An organization that identifies as a Native American group whose ancestors lived within the present-day boundaries of California prior to European contact, but which is not recognized by the federal government as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States due to California's unique history.

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Terminology & definitions

- **Tribal sovereignty:** Tribal Nations' possession of all powers of self government, except those relinquished under treaty with the United States, those that Congress has expressly extinguished, and those that the federal courts have ruled are subject to existing federal law or are inconsistent with overriding national policies. Tribal sovereignty includes the right to form governments, make and enforce civil and criminal law, establish and determine membership, license and regulate activities, zone, and exclude persons from Tribal lands.
- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)** refers to the accumulated knowledge of local and Indigenous peoples about their surrounding ecosystems. TEK is often gathered over centuries, is specific to a particular place and culture, and includes detailed information about plants, animals, and sustainable resource use. In TEK, observations are often drawn from continuous, long-term monitoring of an area, providing invaluable information about sustainable and generative management practices under a variety of changing climate and environmental conditions.

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Eligibility

Input:

- **Eligible tribal entities:** More explicitly state that in addition to both federally and non-federally recognized CA Tribal Nations, Tribal consortia, intertribal organizations, and individual Tribal members—when acting as majority (51%+) owners of farming or cultural land use projects—must have equitable access to land return and stewardship opportunities and be eligible for all recommended programs, leases, and transfers. [Community]
- **Equity across tribes:** The report should emphasize that funding allocations and land return set-asides must be equitable across federally recognized, non-recognized, and consortium-based applicants, given California's unique history of [non-recognized Tribes being excluded from federal recognition] [Community]
- **Cultural ties:** Incorporate a requirement that participating Tribes or members demonstrate cultural ties to the land (e.g., ancestral homeland, traditional trade routes, or cultural territories) so that land return is tied to living cultural connections and not simply economic opportunity. [Community]

Working Session

Feedback on Goal 1: Eligibility

1.3.b: In State programs and policies, define agriculture in a way that is inclusive of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and allow flexibility for diverse Tribal stewardship practices.

- i) Revise existing guidelines that are misaligned with Tribal stewardship, such as the requirement that buffalo be kept in an enclosure.

Discussion

- How should state agencies include TEK in existing ag programs? Should they expand the definition of agriculture so TEK is eligible for ag programs? Should TEK be included as separate eligible “activity” in existing programs? Should new programs be developed specifically for TEK?

Working Session

Feedback on goal 1: Definitions

- **Input:** Ensure report description of traditional tribal uses includes: fire, gathering, forests, specific first foods, acknowledgment practices vary by region, currently limited discussion in report [Community]
- **Already included:** These relationships of care are the foundation for many First Foods, fibers, and medicines, from acorns and elderberries to sedge basket material, that play a critical role in California's ecosystem.
- **Discussion**
 - Add text to Goal 1 narrative: description of the term "Traditional Tribe Uses" including... uses noted above
 - Add Traditional Tribal Uses to glossary using Susanville summary language
 - How should this be distinguished from TEK currently in glossary?

Working Session

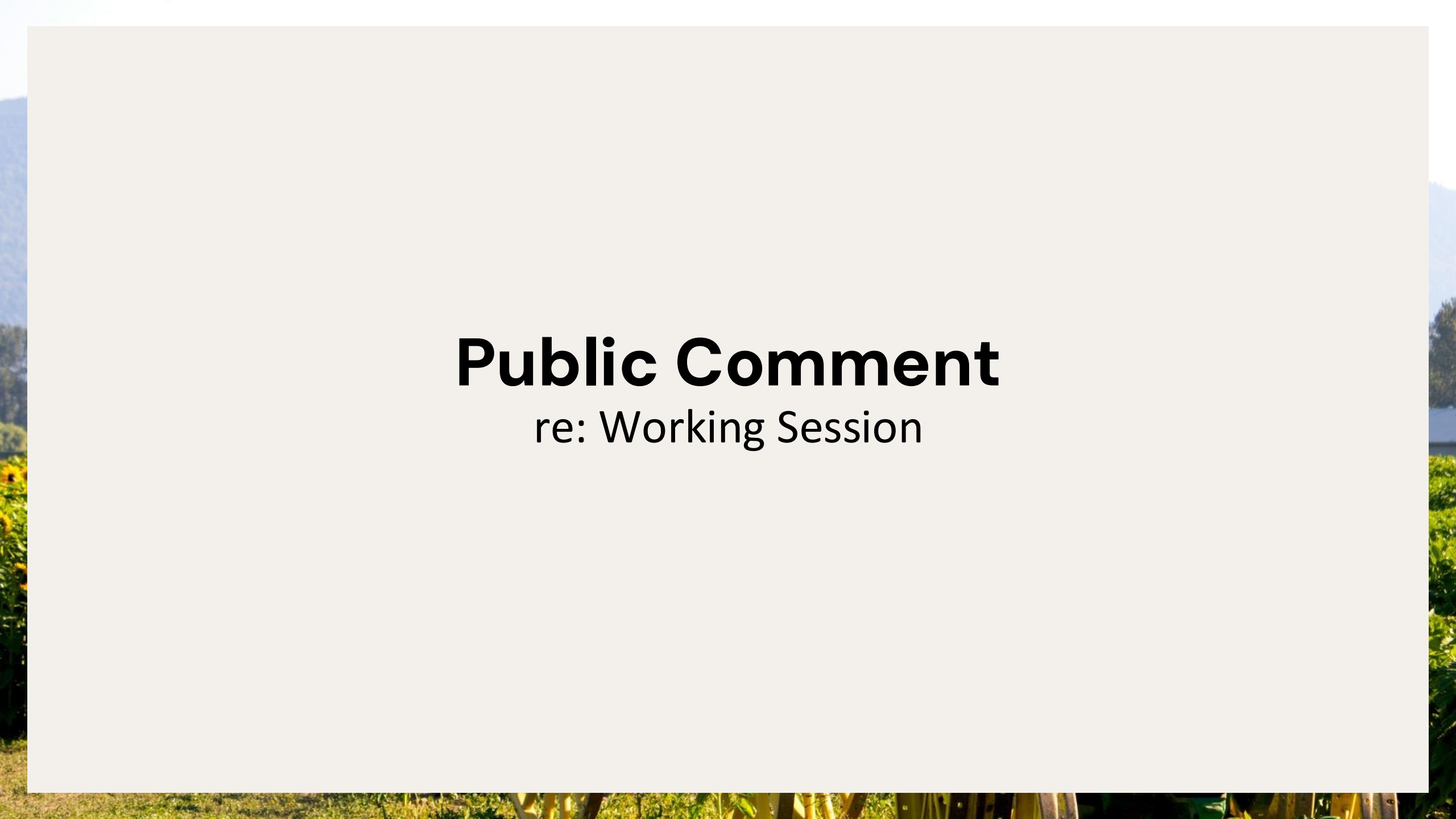
Discussion:

- Order of recommendations
- Scope and level of detail

Working Session

Discussion:

- Confirm next steps and assignments, as applicable.

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Public Comment

re: Working Session

Public Comment Process

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General Public Comment

Public Comment Process

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Summarize, Action Items, Next Steps

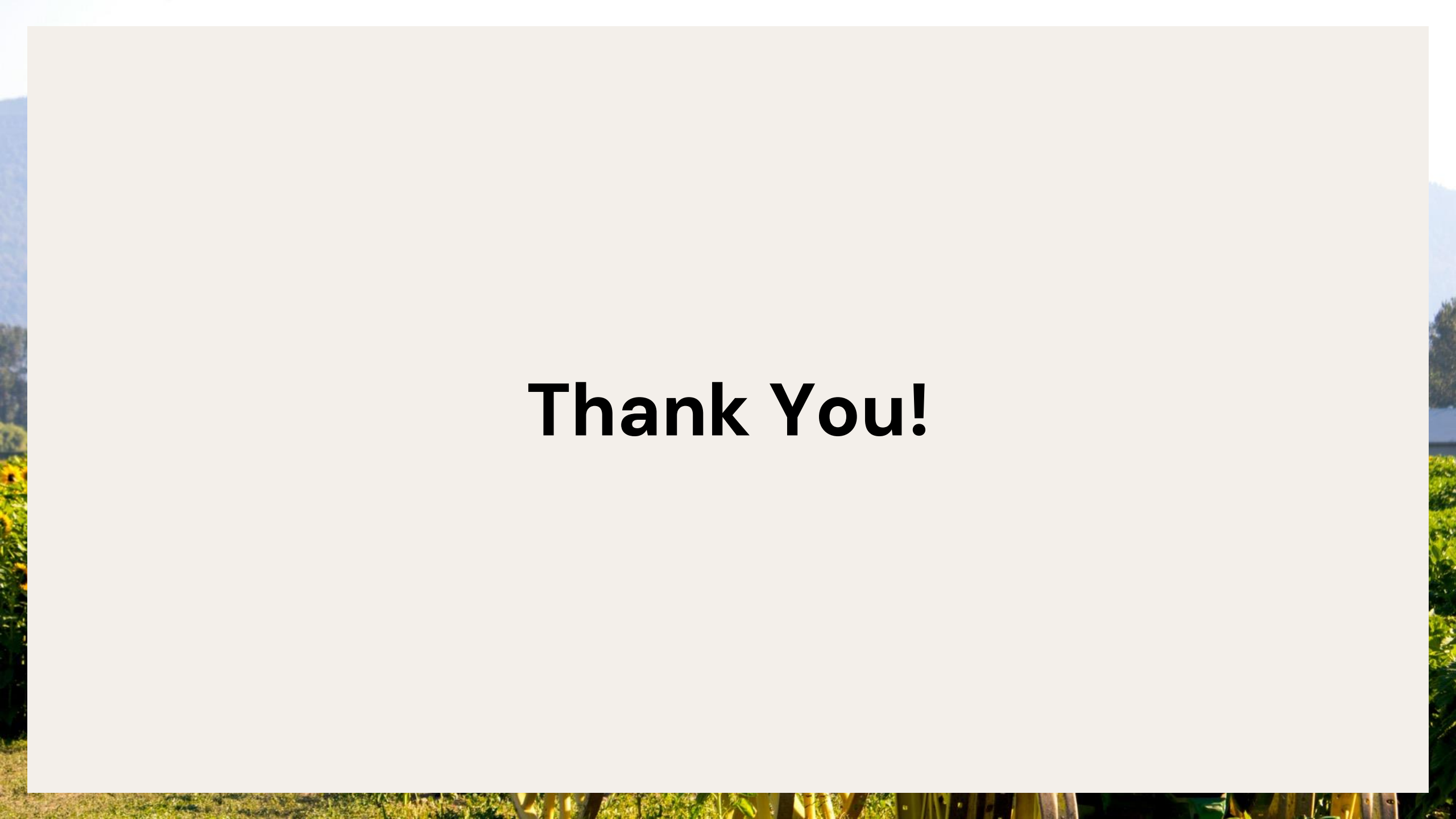
- Review of Action Items and follow up items
- Decide on next meeting + meeting schedule
- Meeting Notes, Recording, and Materials posted to:

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

Upcoming Meetings

- **Goal 3 Subcommittee** : September 17 (Wednesday) | 3 – 5 p.m.
- **Goal 2 Subcommittee** : Sept. 19 (Friday) | 9–11 a.m.
- **Goal 4 Subcommittee** : Sept. 23 (Tuesday) | 9–10:30 a.m.
- **Restorative Lands Subcommittee**: Sept. 24 (Wednesday) | 3 – 5 p.m.
- **Full Task Force Meeting**: Oct 15 & 16 | Ventura & Virtual

Meeting Notes, Recording, and Materials posted to: <https://sgc.ca.gov/meetings/caletf/>



Thank You!