

Briefing Materials

Prepared for the California Agricultural
Land Equity Task Force Meeting

Feb. 24, 2026

Contents

California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Staff Report..... 2
Draft Report Summary.....5
Draft Summaries of Recommendations.....21

California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Staff Report

To California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Members, Feb. 24, 2026

Announcements & updates

Outreach materials and report distribution

At the request of the Task Force, staff are creating outreach materials available for Task Force members' use. They will be accessible on Google Drive and include: 1) a slide template, 2) translated report summaries, 3) PDFs of each recommendation section from the report, and 4) reflection videos. Task Force members will have an opportunity to provide feedback on drafts of these materials during the Feb. 24 meeting.

The report and other Task Force materials will continue to be hosted on SGC's website. Staff are currently working with SGC's communications team to design an accessible webpage.

The team at UC ANR who hosted engagement sessions and interviews about the Task Force's draft recommendations will "close the loop" by sharing the final report with engagement session and interview participants. Staff are currently exploring options for Tribal-focused local assistance to report back to Tribes about the Task Force's final report.

Task Force members have or will present the report at conferences including EcoFarm, California Alliance with Family Farmers' CA Small Farms Conference, and the California Council of Land Trust's California Land and Water Conservation Conference. Members are welcome to use the outreach materials listed above (or develop their own) to participate in future events.

Strategic Growth Council meeting

The Task Force will present its report to the California Strategic Growth Council on February 25, 2026. Following this presentation, the Council will vote on a resolution to thank the Task Force members for their service and conclude and withdraw their appointments.

Post-appointment communication

Following the conclusion of the Task Force, staff will forward relevant communications (such as presentation requests) to Task Force members via a group email list. For presentation requests, staff will include clear deadlines for response.

Members are also welcome to use the group email list to forward requests, questions, or announcements. Any member may remove themselves from this list at any time by notifying staff.

Task Force evaluation

After the Task Force's final meeting, staff will send a voluntary, anonymous survey to Task Force members requesting their feedback on the administration of the Task Force. The goal is to gain instructive insight into what worked and what should be improved to guide future state administration of task forces and similar public bodies.

Climate Bond (Prop 4) program

The Governor's proposed budget for 2026-27 includes \$4.975 million for the "Improve Land Access and Tenure for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers or Tribal Producers" program. As detailed in the Climate Bond (Prop 4), this program makes \$30 million available to the Department of Conservation (DOC), "in consultation with the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force at the Strategic Growth Council, to improve land access and tenure for socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, tribal producers, and beginning farmers and ranchers."

If the allocation remains in the final budget, SGC staff anticipate working with DOC to explore options for implementing this provision.

Local assistance funding

SGC staff are currently reviewing relevant recommendations from the Task Force's final report and evaluating potential administrative costs and timelines to identify the most effective path forward for remaining funds (see the budget table below). Staff anticipate having a plan in place this spring that will include opportunities for public engagement.

Updated Task Force budget table

Current as of December 31, 2025.

| Category | FY 22-23, 23-24, & 24-25 expenditures | FY 25-26 expenditures thru 12/2025 | Total obligated | Total budgeted | Total remaining |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Personnel (SGC staff) | \$477,151 | \$228,922 | \$1,100,760 | \$1,100,760 | \$0 |
| Operating expenses (travel, facilitator, language access, etc.) | \$365,473 | \$25,624 | \$290,579 | \$884,240 | \$202,564 |
| 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 | \$842,624 | \$254,546 | \$1,406,284 | \$3,255,000 | \$1,472,564 |

Draft Report Summary

Staff have developed a draft report summary that will be translated into different languages. Note that staff attempted to keep the language in this summary as close as possible to the language used in the full report. Task Force members will be invited to provide feedback on this draft document during the Feb. 24 meeting.



Advancing Agricultural Land Equity in California

**Recommendations of the California
Agricultural Land Equity Task Force**

Report Summary



The full report can be found online in English at: bit.ly/aletf-report



Overview

California faces an agricultural land equity crisis that must be promptly addressed.

For decades, many producers and Tribal land stewards have been systemically excluded from owning and holding onto agricultural land due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and citizenship status, among other factors. Today, the resulting inequities in ownership and secure access to agricultural land are worsened by increasing land consolidation and financialization, climate change, and burdensome regulations. Together, these conditions produce negative outcomes for agricultural communities and the state's ecological and economic resilience.

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force was established as an independent body in the California Budget Act of 2022 (**AB 179**) to submit policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis. From October 2023 through December 2025, the Task Force developed recommendations through a collaborative public process, including 12 public meetings and extensive community engagement across California. Over 400 producers, California Native American Tribal leaders and members, and others participated in multilingual activities including engagement sessions, site visits, a survey, and guest speakers.

The Task Force’s final report, submitted in December 2025, includes a discussion of historical and contemporary disparities in land access in California, and contains policy recommendations to address the state’s agricultural land equity crisis. The recommendations outline pathways to ensure priority producers and Tribal land stewards have secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.

Recommendations are divided into six sections:



Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.



Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.



Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation.



Preserve California’s agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship.



Prioritize and protect secure land tenure.



Support urban agriculture.

Implementing these recommendations can benefit all Californians by fostering a more resilient and just food system, strengthening local and diverse food economies, and sustaining healthy natural and working lands.

Key terms

Agricultural land equity

Agricultural land equity is when priority producers and Tribal land stewards have access to secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.

Priority producers and Tribal land stewards

Those who have been historically and systematically excluded from landownership and secure tenure for agriculture and traditional Tribal uses. This group is inclusive of individuals identified as socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (**AB 1348**) and as underserved producers (**H.R. 2**). It is also inclusive of farmworkers and those aspiring to start their own agricultural operations.

The full list of key terms is available in the [Glossary \(Appendix A\)](#) of the report.



1. Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return

Federally and non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes have specific histories and relationships with the State of California, resulting in unique challenges and opportunities for advancing agricultural land equity. California was founded on the violent removal, coercion, intimidation, and genocide of Indigenous Peoples from their lands and watersheds. Unratified treaties, militia campaigns, and discriminatory laws left Tribes landless and excluded from legal rights.¹ Today, Tribes hold a fraction of the land they historically stewarded, limiting Tribal Sovereignty, cultural practices, and ecological stewardship.

Persistent barriers to land access and ownership for California Native American Tribes require a cohesive, long-term commitment and response from the state. Ancestral land return restores access to cultural resources such as medicines, plants, and animals, and enables Tribes to restore native ecosystems and ceremonial grounds, boost soil health, and increase biodiversity.

To respect Tribal Sovereignty, ancestral land return should occur without restrictions or encumbrances and involve meaningful, consistent consultation and communication with California Native American Tribes.

Recommendations

- 1.1 Establish an Ancestral Land Return Fund.
- 1.2 Embed ancestral land return for California Native American Tribes in the state's policies and programs.
- 1.3 Return publicly held land to California Native American Tribes.
- 1.4 Enable and promote the implementation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural practices.



2. Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards

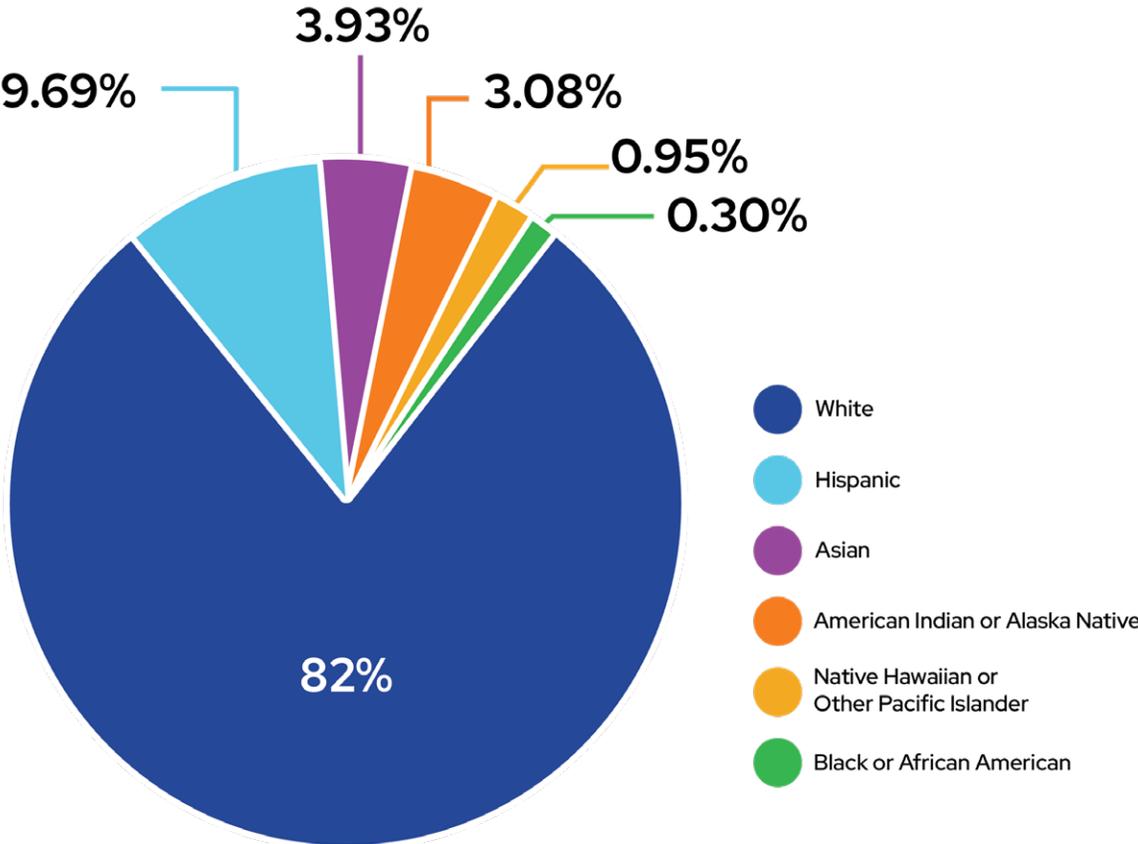
By 2035, 40% of privately held agricultural land is expected to change hands as landowners retire.² Without a clear vision and plan, this transition could worsen current disparities in land access. Eighty-two percent of farmland in California is owned by white producers, while all other racial and ethnic categories combined own the remaining 18%.³

Historical injustices—including but not limited to the violent removal and forced labor of Tribes, racially motivated land takings from African Americans, forced incarceration of Japanese Americans, and exploitative labor conditions—continue to impact priority producers and Tribal land stewards today, who are more likely to face barriers to financing, technical assistance, and access to land. Farmland prices, which have increased 28.3% since 2018, are one of the biggest barriers to ownership for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.⁴ Addressing these barriers requires tailored support that not only acknowledges past and ongoing disparities but begins to implement solutions.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Establish a Restorative Land Fund.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a public education campaign to document past and ongoing harm.
- 2.3 Provide funding for the purchase of agricultural land to be leased or transferred to priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- 2.4 Establish loan and debt forgiveness programs.
- 2.5 Adopt new tax programs and benefits designed to serve priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- 2.6 Continually evaluate and improve funding and incentive programs.
- 2.7 Expand tailored technical assistance for land access and acquisition.

Percent of total acres of owned land in farms in California (2022)⁵



Note: Racial categories are "alone or in combination with other races."





3. Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation

The consolidation and financialization of agricultural land and critical natural resources is a significant driver of inequitable access to agricultural land. While the majority (63.5% in 2017) of California's producers operate on 50 acres or less, just 4.6% of landowners collectively own almost half of total cropland.⁶

Recent decades have seen an increase in consolidated ownership of agricultural land. The number of small farms decreased by 13% between 2017 and 2022, while the number of large farms increased.⁷ When small- and mid-sized farms are replaced by fewer, larger operations, communities experience negative economic, environmental, and health outcomes.

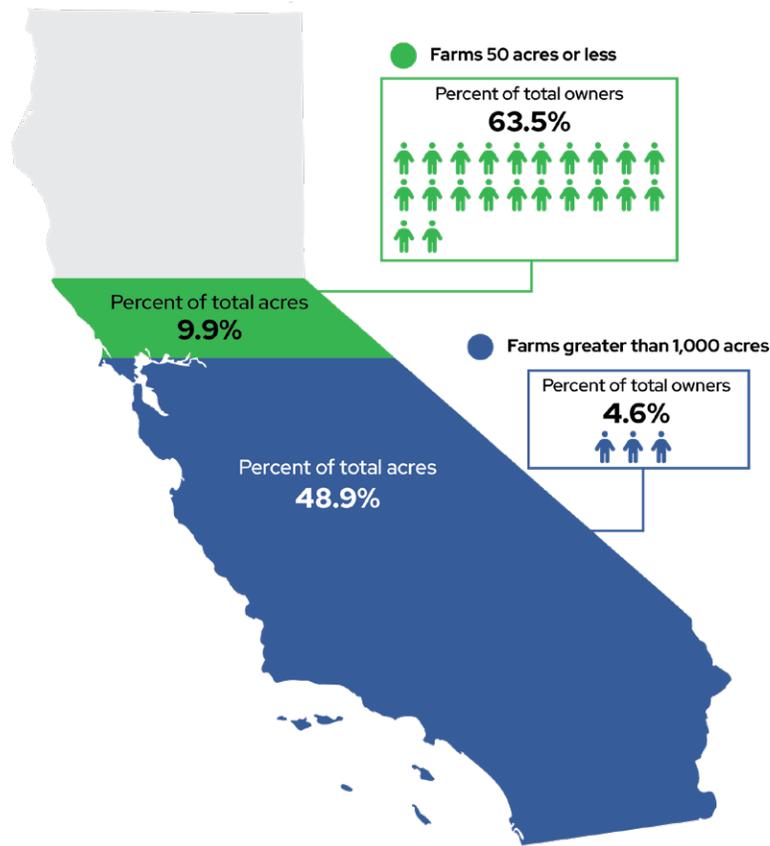
Alongside consolidation, financialization transforms agricultural land into an investment tool for institutional investors and private equity firms, valuing agricultural land for its ability to produce profits rather than food, cultural resources, and community benefits.

These trends worsen disparities rooted in centuries of discriminatory policies that have taken land and generational wealth from priority producers and Tribal land stewards.

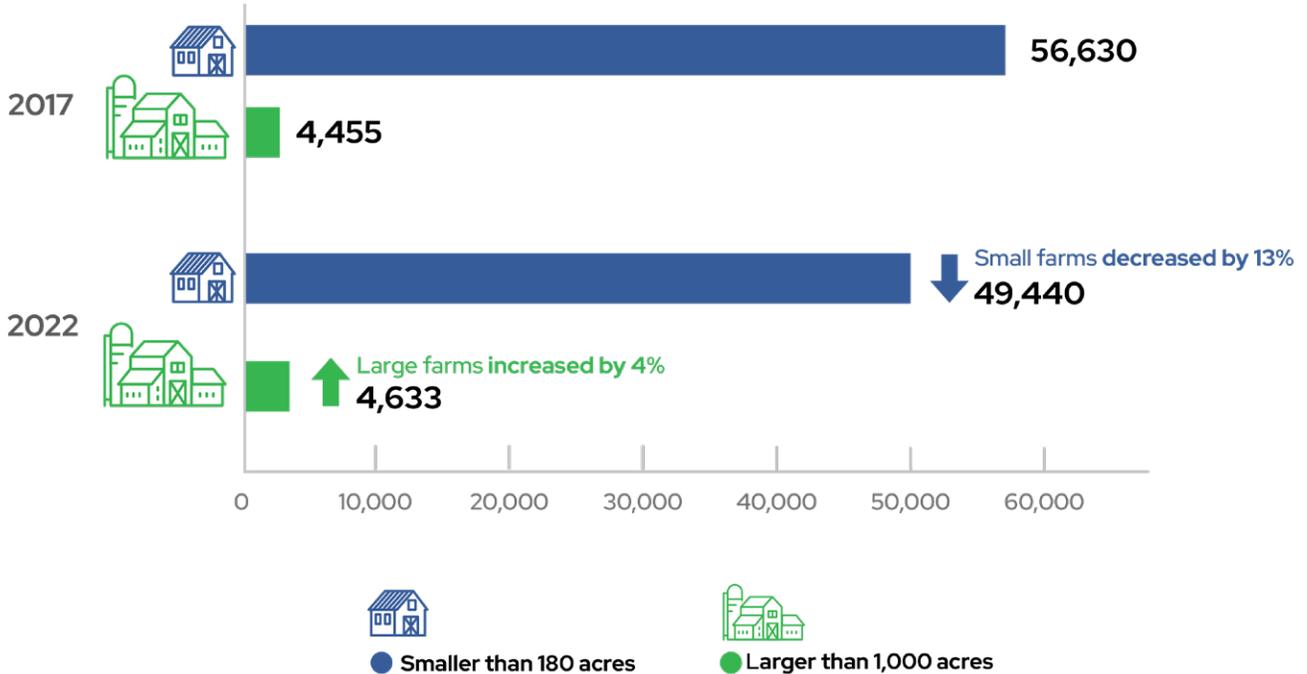
Recommendations

- 3.1 Limit agricultural landownership by investment companies.
- 3.2 Develop local first opportunity to purchase ordinances for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- 3.3 Establish a California Producer Retirement Fund.
- 3.4 Establish and fund a Land Market Monitoring Program.

Farm size in relation to percent of total owners and percent of total acres of cropland owned in California (2017)⁸



Number of California farms by farm size in 2017 and 2022⁹





4. Preserve California's agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship

California's agricultural land base is under threat from urban and industrial development and the negative impacts of centuries of extractive agriculture. California lost more than 1.6 million acres of farm and grazing land between 1984 and 2018, with urban development driving 75% of this loss.¹⁰ The state's highest quality agricultural soil has seen the largest decrease in acreage. In working to address centuries of extractive agricultural practices, the state's groundwater sustainability goals may require an estimated 500,000 to 1 million acres of agricultural land to be taken out of production.¹¹

In this context, the State of California has set a goal of conserving 12,000 acres of cropland and 33,000 acres of grassland per year beginning in 2030, with additional targets beyond this time horizon.¹² These and other climate and conservation efforts should be guided by a comprehensive statewide strategy that addresses both publicly and

privately held land and centers land access opportunities for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.

Recommendations

- 4.1 Develop a statewide agricultural land preservation and stewardship plan.
- 4.2 Improve conservation programs and tools to enable equitable land access and stewardship.
- 4.3 Promote local strategies for agricultural land preservation.
- 4.4 Expand state and local government capacity to effectively and fairly lease publicly held land.



5. Prioritize and protect secure land tenure

Achieving agricultural land equity requires stable and secure relationships to land, supportive regulatory structures, and long-term economic viability. Many priority producers and Tribal land stewards operate on short-term or informal leases, which can disqualify tenants from public funding programs and discourage regenerative practices and infrastructure improvements. Burdensome regulations, restrictive zoning codes, and housing barriers also present significant challenges to maintaining secure tenure and agricultural businesses.

Overcoming these barriers requires fair lease structures, appropriately designed regulations, flexible zoning and housing policies, and technical assistance designed to ensure long-term viability and stewardship.

Recommendations

- 5.1 Address power imbalances in landowner-tenant relationships.
- 5.2 Expand the capacity of the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Farmer Equity Office.
- 5.3 Establish and fund regional Ag Ombuds positions.
- 5.4 Address inequitable policy consequences while respecting the intention of the law.
- 5.5 Incentivize and support local governments to adopt zoning and land use planning practices that facilitate secure land tenure and stewardship.



6. Support urban agriculture

California's cities and suburbs present unique challenges and opportunities for advancing agricultural land equity. Urban agriculture offers benefits such as improved access to nutritious foods, community engagement, workforce development, and expanded green spaces. Urban producers and Tribal land stewards benefit from these opportunities by working close to their customers and the communities they serve.

Despite these benefits, there are many barriers to urban agriculture, including exclusion from funding programs, high water costs, and restrictive zoning. Recent initiatives, such as CDFA's Urban Agriculture Grant Program and the 2024 Climate Bond (Proposition 4), provide much-needed funding. Beyond financial support, systemic changes are needed to integrate urban agriculture into planning, reduce regulatory barriers, and ensure equitable access and secure tenure for urban growers.

Recommendations

- 6.1 Ensure eligibility of urban producers and Tribal land stewards in existing programs and provide tailored funding.
- 6.2 Make land available for urban agriculture and address barriers to secure tenure.



Eleven of 13 Task Force members and SGC staff in Sacramento

Next steps: Implementation and evaluation

The context, stories, and recommendations in the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force's report lay the groundwork for future action. In many cases, the fastest and most effective way to enact these recommendations will be through legislation. The Legislature should clearly state that supporting the stewardship of agricultural land by priority producers and Tribal land stewards is a core legislative intent. Legal guidance will be necessary to ensure all applicable laws are considered.

Effectively developing and implementing these recommendations will require centering priority producers and Tribal land stewards and prioritizing cultural humility, capacity building, and flexible processes. A robust evaluation framework with goals, metrics,

and timelines should be developed to track progress and ensure long-term impact.

While the Governor and Legislature are the principal audiences, implementing the recommendations will require coordinated advocacy, dedication, and investment by everyone who seeks to address the agricultural land equity crisis in California.

Please review the full report for more context and detail on the challenges identified and solutions proposed for advancing agricultural land equity.



The full report can be found online in English at: bit.ly/aletf-report

Endnotes

- 1 Johnston-Dodds, Kimberly. (2002). "Early California laws and policies related to California Indians." California Research Bureau. Last accessed Feb. 3, 2026 from <https://courts.ca.gov/publication/california-research-bureau-early-california-laws-and-policies-related-california>
- 2 Hunter, M., A. Sorensen, T. Nogeire-McRae, S. Beck, S. Shutts, R. Murphy. (2022). "Farms under threat 2040: Choosing an abundant future." American Farmland Trust. Last accessed Oct. 28, 2025 from https://farmlandinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/06/AFT_FUT2040_AbundantFuture_ExecutiveSummary.pdf
- 3 U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2024). "2022 Census of Agriculture: California state and county data." National Agricultural Statistics Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from <https://www.nass.usda.gov/>
- 4 "Land values 2022 summary." (2022). U.S. Department of Agriculture. National Agricultural Statistics Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Todays_Reports/reports/land0822.pdf
- 5 U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2024). "2022 Census of Agriculture: California state and county data." National Agricultural Statistics Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from <https://www.nass.usda.gov/>
- 6 Macaulay, Luke and Van Butsic. (2017). "Ownership characteristics and crop selection in California cropland." California Agriculture 71(4), pp. 221-230. <https://doi.org/10.3733/ca.2017a0041>
- 7 O'Connor, Teresa. (2024). "What the 2022 Census of Agriculture confirms about California." American Farmland Trust. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from <https://farmland.org/2022-census-of-agriculture-california/>
- 8 Macaulay, Luke and Van Butsic. (2017). "Ownership characteristics and crop selection in California cropland." California Agriculture 71(4), pp. 221-230. <https://doi.org/10.3733/ca.2017a0041>
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 "Fast facts." (n.d.). California Department of Conservation. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Fast-Facts.aspx>
- 11 Sunding, David and Roland-Holst. (2020). "Water blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley economic impact analysis: Phase one results." The University of California, Berkeley. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from <https://cawaterlibrary.net/document/water-blueprint-for-the-san-joaquin-valley-economic-impactanalysis-phase-one-results/>
- 12 "California's nature-based solutions climate targets." (2024). Nature-Based Climate Solutions. Last accessed Oct. 14, 2025 from <https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/Californias-NBS-Climate-Targets-2024.pdf>



More information about the Task Force and member bios are available at: sgc.ca.gov/initiatives/alei

The Task Force was administered by the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) yet operated independently and maintained final decision-making control over the contents of its report. The views and recommendations expressed in the report are those of the Task Force and not necessarily those of SGC or the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

Draft Summaries of Recommendations

Staff are developing 1-page summaries tailored to specific topics and audiences. Below are draft summaries of recommendations focused on local governments, technical assistance, and funding. Task Force members will be invited to provide feedback on these draft documents during the Feb. 24 meeting.

Advancing Agricultural Land Equity in California: Recommendations of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Summary of Recommendations: Actions for Local Governments

Overview

California faces an agricultural land equity crisis that must be promptly addressed. For decades, many producers and Tribal land stewards have been systemically excluded from owning and holding onto agricultural land due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and citizenship status, among other factors. Today, the resulting inequities in ownership and secure access to agricultural land are worsened by increasing land consolidation and financialization, climate change, and burdensome regulations.

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force was established in the California Budget Act of 2022 ([AB 179](#)) to submit policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis. The Task Force developed recommendations through a collaborative public process that engaged over 400 producers, California Native American Tribal leaders and members, and others across California. The final report was submitted in December 2025.

Agricultural land equity is when priority producers and Tribal land stewards have access to secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.

Recommendations are divided into six sections:

- 1) Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.
- 2) Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- 3) Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation.
- 4) Preserve California's agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship.
- 5) Prioritize and protect secure land tenure.
- 6) Support urban agriculture.

Select recommendations for local governments

Local governments have a key role to play in advancing equitable land access through preserving agricultural land, prioritizing Tribal sovereignty, and reducing barriers for urban and rural producers. For example, local governments should adopt innovative zoning ordinances and policies that allow for Tribal stewardship and for the wide range of infrastructure needed to maintain a viable farm operation.

Local governments can also limit development on agricultural land and ensure that leasing terms on publicly held land are fair and accessible for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.

Below is a selection of recommendations that outline policies and actions that local governments can engage with to achieve agricultural land equity. These recommendations, written for the State Governor and Legislature, may also be considered and advanced at the local level. For detailed information, including complementary recommendations and a more comprehensive understanding of how land equity may be achieved, please review the full report.

- 1.3 Return publicly held land to California Native American Tribes.
 - 1.3.c Direct public entities that hold land to adopt right of first refusal policies that ensure public lands transitioned out of public ownership are offered to California Native American Tribes first at zero or minimal cost.
- 1.4 Enable and promote the implementation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural practices
 - 1.4.c Direct the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to work with California Native American Tribes to develop model zoning ordinances that address the specific needs of non-federally recognized and federally recognized California Native American Tribes. Include mechanisms to support stewardship on Tribal land, including traditional Tribal housing.
 - 1.4.d Provide guidance on establishing Cultural Conservation Zoning Overlays, like Cultural Conservation Easements, to give non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes land use authority over returned land (see Appendix D for model language).
 - 1.4.e Prioritize Tribal stewardship and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in coastal areas
- 3.2 Develop local first opportunity to purchase ordinances for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- 4.3 Promote local strategies for agricultural land preservation.
 - 4.3.a Incentivize and support local governments to establish agricultural land development mitigation programs that preserve adjacent agricultural land of the same or better quality at not less than a one-to-one ratio.
 - 4.3.b Incentivize and support local governments to adopt innovative land use planning strategies to limit development on agricultural land by establishing urban growth boundaries and implementing agriculture preservation overlays.

-
- 4.4 Expand state and local government capacity to effectively and fairly lease publicly held land.
 - 4.4.b Direct a coalition of state agencies, local governments, and technical assistance providers with knowledge about equitable contracts to develop and make available models and templates for fair, secure, and long-term lease agreements on publicly held land.
 - 4.4.c Fund counties and cities to hire agricultural land liaisons whose purpose is to work with local agencies, community-based organizations, and priority producers and Tribal land stewards to track available publicly held land, publicize available lands in an accessible way, and support all parties in establishing fair and effective lease agreements.
 - 4.4.d Incentivize and support local governments to make land that they already hold accessible to priority producers and Tribal land stewards by providing secure, long-term leases
- 5.5 Incentivize and support local governments to adopt zoning and land use planning practices that facilitate secure land tenure and stewardship.
 - 5.5.a Direct the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to develop model ordinances that facilitate secure agricultural land tenure and stewardship, with emphasis on equitable land access, regenerative agriculture, and Tribal co-stewardship (see Appendix D for models).
 - 5.5.b Incentivize and support revisions to zoning codes and local regulations to facilitate the continued viability of small-scale, diversified agricultural operations
- 6.2 Make land available for urban agriculture and address barriers to secure tenure.
 - 6.2.c Incentivize and support the inclusion of urban agriculture in access agreements on publicly held lands managed by local jurisdictions, such as parks and urban lots.
 - 6.2.d Direct the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to compile existing zoning codes, urban agriculture assessments, and general plan amendments from jurisdictions that have removed barriers to urban agriculture as part of a public-facing report identifying ways that jurisdictions can support urban agriculture
 - 6.2.e Remove legal and zoning barriers to compost production at scales that support urban agriculture.

The full report can be found online in English at:

[QR code and bit.ly link to full report]

More information about the Task Force and member bios are available at:
sgc.ca.gov/initiatives/alei.

DRAFT

Advancing Agricultural Land Equity in California: Recommendations of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Summary of Recommendations: Technical Assistance

Overview

California faces an agricultural land equity crisis that must be promptly addressed. For decades, many producers and Tribal land stewards have been systemically excluded from owning and holding onto agricultural land due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and citizenship status, among other factors. Today, the resulting inequities in ownership and secure access to agricultural land are worsened by increasing land consolidation and financialization, climate change, and burdensome regulations.

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force was established in the California Budget Act of 2022 ([AB 179](#)) to submit policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis. The Task Force developed recommendations through a collaborative public process that engaged over 400 producers, California Native American Tribal leaders and members, and others across California. The final report was submitted in December 2025.

Agricultural land equity is when priority producers and Tribal land stewards have access to secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.

Recommendations are divided into six sections:

- Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.
- Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation.
- Preserve California's agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship.
- Prioritize and protect secure land tenure.
- Support urban agriculture.

Select recommendations addressing technical assistance needs

Land access is not enough to achieve agricultural land equity; rather, it requires stable and secure relationships to land, appropriate and supportive regulatory structures, and suitable conditions for

long-term economic viability. Tailored technical assistance is critical to effective, fair, and long-term agricultural land access. Throughout the Task Force's process, priority producers and Tribal land stewards emphasized the importance of pairing support for finding and obtaining agricultural land with technical assistance to help navigate the complicated process of finding, acquiring, and staying on the land. Specific services that could be provided with technical assistance include:

- Real estate, legal, and financial expertise required to successfully navigate and negotiate a fair deal when acquiring agricultural land.
- Assistance in complying with complicated and burdensome regulations, each with their own set of reporting and compliance requirements.
- Support in navigating local zoning, permitting, ordinances, code enforcement, and liens, which is difficult without support.

Below is a selection of recommendations intended to increase the accessibility of technical assistance for priority producers and Tribal land stewards. For detailed information, including complementary recommendations and a more comprehensive understanding of how agricultural land equity may be achieved, please review the full report.

- **1.1.b** Utilize the Ancestral Land Return Fund to support technical assistance and legal aid to federally recognized California Native American Tribes converting fee land to trust land and navigating deeds, titles, water rights, succession plans, and trusts, with specific support focused on consolidating ownership of highly fractionated lands.
- **2.1.b** Utilize the Restorative Land Fund to support legal and technical assistance for awardees to develop appropriate business and governance plans, including cooperative and community landownership structures.
- **2.7.a** Provide funding to technical assistance providers who assist priority producers and Tribal land stewards with the following services:
 - Advice and guidance on agricultural land access and acquisition.
 - Legal and technical assistance to navigate deeds, titles, and water rights; conduct agricultural land and business succession planning; establish business entities and trusts; resolve heirs' landownership and succession issues; and address other agricultural land tenure barriers.
 - Land-linking services that help connect landowners and land seekers.
- **2.7.c** Increase support for technical assistance providers who serve priority producers and Tribal land stewards in more effective, thorough, and equitable ways by funding services that:
 - Are offered in diverse languages, demonstrate cultural humility, include digital technology support, and are responsive to unique regional needs.
 - Support farmworkers and beginning producers and Tribal land stewards in transitioning to agricultural business ownership and operations.

- Include tailored expertise and assistance for cooperatives governed by producers and farmworkers who co-own and co-steward land to address the unique complexity and lack of current support for these entities.
- **4.2.e** Fund the creation and delivery of training programs for land trusts, public agencies, appraisers, lenders, and technical assistance providers to promote cultural humility, especially in working with California Native American Tribes.
- **5.1.d** Create funding for and increase access to legal support, technical assistance, and mediation services for priority producers and Tribal land stewards at low or no cost, including contract and relationship development and negotiation services.
- **5.3.a** Establish and fund new, permanent Ag Ombuds positions within public, non-regulatory agencies, such as University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) or Resource Conservation Districts.
- Task newly established Ag Ombuds with serving as regional service providers for priority producers and Tribal land stewards to navigate permitting, regulatory processes, and public resources at all levels of government.
- **5.4.b** Require that all regulatory programs provide technical assistance to assist priority producers and Tribal land stewards with compliance.

The full report can be found online in English at:

[QR code and bit.ly link to full report]

More information about the Task Force and member bios are available at:
sgc.ca.gov/initiatives/alei.

Advancing Agricultural Land Equity in California: Recommendations of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Summary of Recommendations: Funding

Overview

California faces an agricultural land equity crisis that must be promptly addressed. For decades, many producers and Tribal land stewards have been systemically excluded from owning and holding onto agricultural land due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and citizenship status, among other factors. Today, the resulting inequities in ownership and secure access to agricultural land are worsened by increasing land consolidation and financialization, climate change, and burdensome regulations.

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force was established in the California Budget Act of 2022 ([AB 179](#)) to submit policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis. The Task Force developed recommendations through a collaborative public process that engaged over 400 producers, California Native American Tribal leaders and members, and others across California. The final report was submitted in December 2025.

Agricultural land equity is when priority producers and Tribal land stewards have access to secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.

Recommendations are divided into six sections:

- Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.
- Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation.
- Preserve California's agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship.
- Prioritize and protect secure land tenure.
- Support urban agriculture.

Select recommendations addressing funding needs

The value of farm real estate in California has increased by 28.3% since 2018. According to the latest USDA Census of Agriculture, prices reached a high of an average of \$12,000 per acre in 2022,

which was a 10.1% increase from the previous year¹. Throughout its process, the Task Force consistently heard how high agricultural land prices serve as a primary barrier to priority producers and Tribal land stewards in accessing and establishing secure tenure on agricultural land. Direct funding is essential to help priority producers and Tribal land stewards overcome the challenges posed by California's high and rising farm real estate costs.

Below is a selection of recommendations intended to provide funding support to priority producers and Tribal land stewards. For detailed information, including complementary recommendations and a more comprehensive understanding of how land equity may be achieved, please review the full report.

- **1.1.a** Develop an Ancestral Land Return Fund for California Native American Tribes to acquire agricultural land within their ancestral territories.
- **2.1.a** Develop a Restorative Land Fund that is accessible to priority producers and Tribal land stewards who wish to acquire, maintain ownership, and establish tenure on land in California for agricultural use.
- **2.3.a** Fund organizations that directly benefit priority producers and Tribal land stewards to purchase and then lease or transfer agricultural land to priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- **2.4.a** Establish a loan program with low-interest, loan forgiveness, or reverse amortization options to support land acquisition and wealth-building for priority producers and Tribal land stewards who are often excluded from available finance.
- **3.3.a** Establish and fund a California Producer Retirement Fund to ensure producers and Tribal land stewards have a secure retirement option without depending on the sale of their land to the highest bidder.
- **4.2.a** In new and existing conservation programs, fund:
 - The acquisition of agricultural conservation easements and enhancements
 - Permitting, deferred maintenance, infrastructure, farmworker housing, and other costs to bring a property into a ready state to support a viable agricultural operation
 - Transaction costs and legal and technical support to negotiate and close land transactions, leases, and conservation and agricultural easements.
- **5.1.d** Regarding the leasing of agricultural land, fund and increase access to legal support, technical assistance, and mediation services for priority producers and Tribal land stewards at low or no cost, including contract and relationship development and negotiation services.
- **6.1.b** Fund through continuous appropriation existing grant programs focused on urban agriculture, such as CDFA's Urban Agriculture Grant Program, and expand programs to identify and address gaps in support for urban agriculture and regenerative agricultural use.

¹ "Land values 2022 summary." (2022). U.S. Department of Agriculture. National Agricultural Statistics Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Todays_Reports/reports/land0822.pdf

The full report can be found online in English at:
[QR code and bit.ly link to full report]

More information about the Task Force and member bios are available at:
sgc.ca.gov/initiatives/alei.

DRAFT