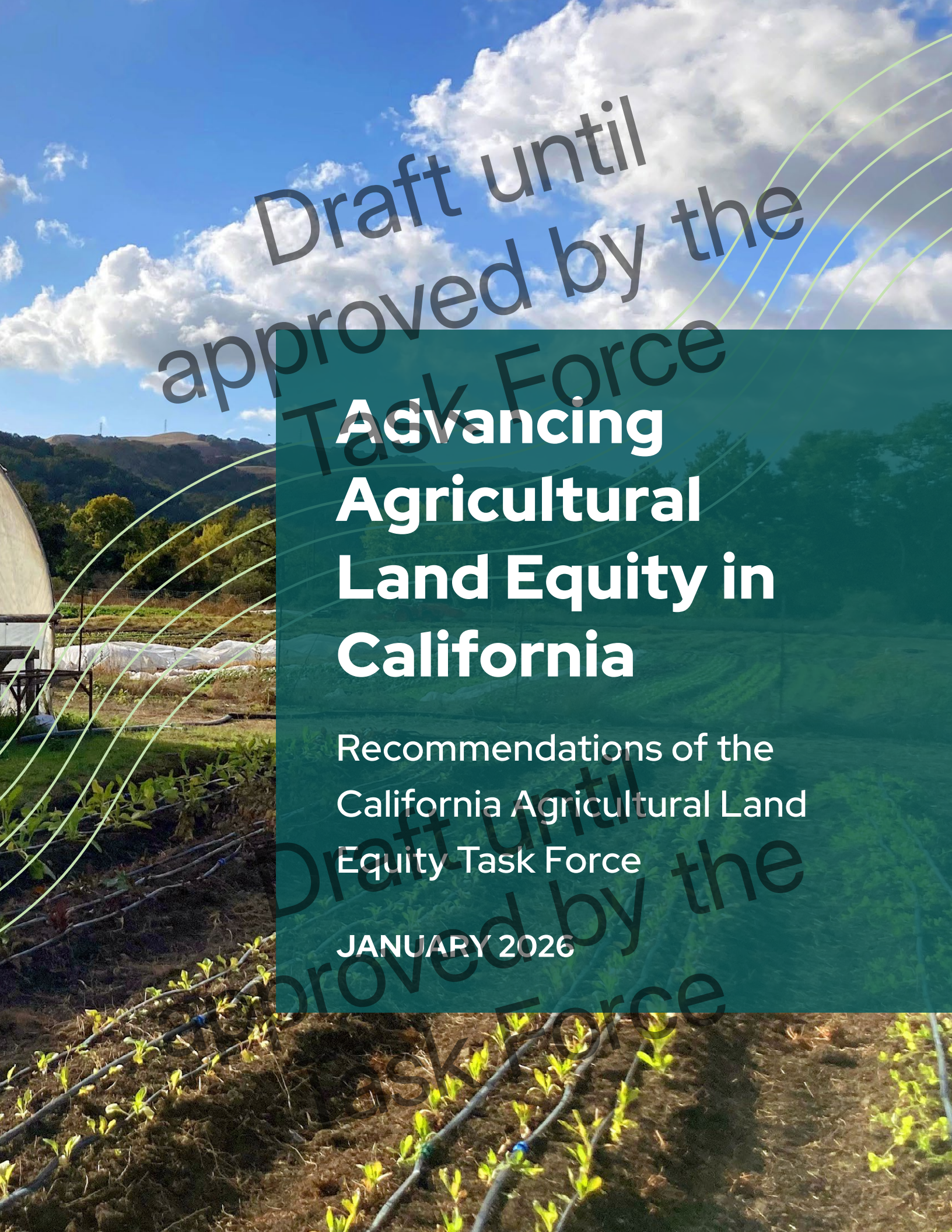


Advancing Agricultural Land Equity in California

Recommendations of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

JANUARY 2026

Draft until approved by the Task Force

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

Dream Farm in Fresno

Executive Summary

California faces an agricultural land equity crisis that must be promptly addressed. For decades, many producers and land stewards in California have been systemically excluded from landownership and secure tenure due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and citizenship status, among other factors. Today, these exclusions intersect with agricultural land consolidation and financialization, climate change, and burdensome regulations resulting in negative outcomes for agricultural communities and the state's ecological and economic resilience.

Addressing these harms requires active efforts to ensure that all people have secure and affordable access to viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and culturally valuable resources, free from systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation. In turn, these efforts hold potential to benefit all Californians by fostering a more resilient and just food system through strengthening local, diverse food economies and sustaining healthy natural and working lands.

Established in the **California Budget Act of 2022 (AB 179)**, the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force is an independent 13-member body directed to "submit a report (by Jan. 1, 2026) to the Legislature and Governor…that includes a set of policy recommendations on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis."

The Task Force is an independent body administered by the California Strategic Growth Council. As an independent body composed of public members with diverse backgrounds and experiences, the Task Force is uniquely situated to provide the Governor and Legislature with an understanding of people's lived experiences with agricultural land access and tenure.

Recommendations are divided into six topic areas:

1. Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.
2. Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and 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.

This report is the result of two years of public meetings, site visits, guest speakers, presentations, and community engagement sessions across California. In addition to relying on members' expertise, the Task Force prioritized community engagement and outreach throughout its process. The views and recommendations expressed herein are those of the Task Force and not necessarily those of the California Strategic Growth Council or the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

Eleven of 13 Task Force members at their first meeting in Sacramento in 2023

Summary of recommendations

1. Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.

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 land stewards.

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 land stewards.
2.4 Establish loan and debt forgiveness programs.
2.5 Adopt new tax programs and benefits designed to serve priority producers and land stewards.
2.6 Continually evaluate and improve funding and incentive programs.
2.7 Expand tailored technical assistance for land access and acquisition.

3. Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation.

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

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

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.

- 5.1 Address power imbalances in landowner-tenant relationships.
- 5.2 Expand the capacity of CDFA's 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.

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

Task Force meeting in San Diego

Table of Contents

Coast Live Oak (Quercus agrifolia) seeds close-up

Overview of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Established in the **California Budget Act of 2022 (AB 179)**, the 13-member California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force (Task Force) is an independent body directed to "submit a report (by Jan. 1, 2026) to the Legislature and Governor…that includes a set of policy recommendations on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis."

The Task Force is administered by the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) yet operates independently of SGC direction and oversight. SGC staff, with support from California State University, Sacramento, facilitated public meetings and community engagement and assisted the Task Force in documenting, discussing, refining, and finalizing its recommendations, while aiming to accurately reflect the Task Force's ideas and opinions throughout the process. The Task Force has maintained final decision-making control over the contents of this report.

Membership

Per **AB 179**, Task Force members were appointed by the Strategic Growth Council, in consultation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Farm Equity Advisor and the California Truth and Healing Council. The following individuals were appointed to the Task Force in accordance with the membership categories as established by the Legislature.. The elected chair and vice chair are listed first, followed by the other members in alphabetical order by first name

Nelson Hawkins
Task Force Chair, and Founder, We Grow Farms and Co-Executive Director, Ujamaa Farmer Collective

Emily Burgueno
Task Force Vice Chair, and Head Seed Keeper, Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel

Darlene Franco
Chief Executive Officer and Wukchumni Council Chairwoman, Wukchumni Tribe

Doria Robinson
Agricultural Industry Member, California State Board of Food and Agriculture, and Executive Director, Urban Tilth

Dorian Payán
Director of Holistic Land Relations, Sustainable Economies Law Center

Irene de Barraicua
Director of Policy and Communications, Líderes Campesinas

James Nakahara
Farm Business Advisor, Kitchen Table Advisors

Lawrence Harlan
Former Treasurer, Fort Bidwell Indian Community Council

Liya Schwartzman
Senior Program Manager, California FarmLink

Nathaniel Brown
Owner/Operator, Brown Sugar Farm

Qi Zhou
Member, California Department of Agriculture BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee, and Community Engagement and Collaboration Program Manager, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

Ruth Dahlquist-Willard
Interim Director, University of California Sustainable Agriculture Resource and Education Program (UC SAREP)

Thea Rittenhouse
Farm Equity Advisor, California Department of Food and Agriculture

Development of recommendations

The recommendations in this report were developed by the Task Force through a collaborative process from October 2023 to December 2025.

Public meetings

The Task Force hosted a total of 12 hybrid public meetings across California. Most meetings included site visits at nearby farms and ranches, urban gardens, and Tribal farms and gardens, along with invited speakers who shared their expertise and lived experiences specific to the region. In addition, the Task Force established several subcommittees that explored specific topics through virtual public meetings.

Community engagement

The Task Force made community engagement a top priority to ensure its final recommendations directly reflect the needs and concerns of the communities its members serve and represent. A comprehensive overview of the outreach process is available in Appendix E.

The Task Force and support staff engaged with more than 400 people through a variety of outreach activities conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean, and designed to reach producers and land stewards who have been systemically excluded from land access and secure tenure.

The preliminary draft of the report was released in February 2025, with updated versions made public ahead of each Task Force meeting. Engagement sessions focused on the most recent

Farmers of Esperanza Community Farms at a farm stewarded by Santa Cruz Land Trust in Watsonville

[Placeholder: Map of California documenting locations of Task Force meetings, site visits, and engagement sessions]

available draft. For example, Tribal and producer engagement sessions held during summer 2025 focused on the May 2025 Draft Report, meaning that newer content—such as the Restorative Land Fund (2.1), which was developed in response to July 2025 engagement sessions—was not included in those summer discussions. The Task Force received public comment on each iteration of its draft report.

Technical guidance

The report development process also included review by an advisory committee and an interagency review panel to improve and refine the Task Force's draft recommendations. The Task Force solicited and incorporated input from advisory committee members on specific topics and concepts as needs were identified. The advisory committee members included:

- **Adam Calo**, Radboud University
- **Angel S. Fernandez-Bou**, Union of Concerned Scientists
- **Cassandra Lynn Ferrera**, Center for Ethical Land Transition
- **Catherine Brinkley**, University of California, Davis
- **Jamie Fanous**, Community Alliance with Family Farmers
- **Kathryn Lyddan**, Convivial Land Consulting, LLC
- **Marisa Raya**, University of California, Davis
- **Nitumigaabow Champagne**, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians

The interagency review panel consisted of staff from 11 state agencies and departments who reviewed the draft recommendations for overlap with their agencies' existing goals, programs, and operations. Final decisions regarding whether and how to implement feedback were made by the Task Force.

Woody Ryno Farms in Arcata

Defining agricultural land equity

Through deliberation and engagement, the Task Force developed the following definition of agricultural land equity:

> *Agricultural land equity is when all people have secure and affordable access to viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.*

Advancing agricultural land equity requires changing policies, practices, systems, and structures to address concentrated market forces and ownership of natural resources to achieve meaningful improvements in the lives of producers and land stewards who have been historically and systematically excluded from secure land tenure.

Effective progress toward agricultural land equity requires a nuanced and community-centered understanding of how various forms of prejudice intersect to produce specific barriers to land access. These intersecting prejudices and barriers must be considered when designingsolutions across socioeconomic, geographic, and historical contexts. Rather than a singular checklist of required components, progress toward agricultural land equity must be designed and led by individuals and communities that land equity is intended to serve.

Rather than a singular checklist of required components, progress toward agricultural land equity must be designed and led by individuals and communities that land equity is intended to serve.

Land equity may represent different goals and require distinct courses of action depending on the historical and contemporary injustices being addressed and the specific individuals, communities, organizations, and governments involved. For California Native American Tribes, land equity requires full Sovereignty on ancestral lands. For beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, land equity means having the land needed to make a stable, dignified living as a producer or land steward and passing land on to the next generation. And for others, achieving land equity means building capacity for cooperative landholding and collective organizing.

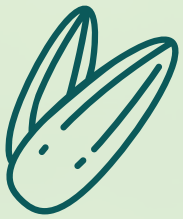
To reflect the range of experiences, practices, knowledges, and forms of stewardship that the Task Force encountered through its process, this report defines agriculture as the knowledge and practice of caring for and cultivating plants, animals, and ecosystems for food, fiber, medicine, or other resources.[1] This includes gardening, horticulture, silviculture, viticulture, dairying, poultry farming, beekeeping, ranching, aquaculture, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge and practices. Building from this definition of agriculture, agricultural land is land that is stewarded to produce resources valuable to the communities engaged in the practices and knowledge of cultivation.

These definitions are intended to be inclusive of the producers and land stewards who have been and continue to be intentionally excluded and thus differ from those that are most commonly used in state policies and programs. Throughout this report, priority producers and land stewards refer to socially disadvantaged and historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and Tribal land stewards, as defined in the **2017 Farmer Equity Act (AB 1348)** and the **Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (H.R. 2)**. The Task Force acknowledges farmworkers are not explicitly mentioned in these definitions and notes that the term "priority producers and land stewards" as used in this report is inclusive of farmworkers and other producers and land stewards who aspire to start their own agricultural operations.

The following section outlines the importance of prioritizing these specific groups to eliminate disparities, advance collective well-being, and ensure that all producers and land stewards in California can fully thrive.

> Priority producers and land stewards refer to socially disadvantaged and historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and Tribal land stewards, as defined in the 2017 Farmer Equity Act (AB 1348) and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (H.R. 2)

1. Note that this definition of agriculture differs from Cal. Civ. Code § 3482.5(e) (2013) which defines "agricultural activity" as "the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural commodity including timber, viticulture, apiculture, or horticulture, the raising of livestock, fur bearing animals, fish, or poultry, and any practices performed by a farmer or on a farm as incident to or in conjunction with those farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market, or delivery to carriers for transportation to market." Last accessed Oct. 23, 2025 from https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=CIV&sectionNum=3482.5



Agricultural land
is land that is stewarded
to produce resources
valuable to the
communities engaged
in the practices and
knowledge of cultivation.

Olive Farms in Fresno

Historical injustices and contemporary disparities

California's agricultural industry is marked by extreme disparities. California is the leading agricultural producer in the country and the world's fifth-largest producer. Yet, while the state's agricultural industry has produced wealth for some, the large majority struggle to sustain their businesses, families, and communities, often due to a lack of secure access to viable land.[1]

Inadequate access to agricultural land is the primary challenge for producers and land stewards who are part of marginalized social groups.[2] This is a significant portion of California's agricultural community; according to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, in California, approximately 20%, or 1 in 5 agricultural producers and land stewards, are considered socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.[3]

These inequities are the result of historical patterns of displacement and unequal distribution of land that continue to impact California's communities today.[4] Indentured labor and enslavement have particularly enduring legacies. Although California entered the U.S. in 1850 as a free state, the forced labor of Native communities was already a core practice among settlers and was foundational to the California mission slave system and agricultural development in the state.[5]

While the state's agricultural industry has produced wealth for some, the large majority struggle to sustain their businesses, families, and communities, often due to a lack of secure access to viable land.

Among many other atrocities, the early State of California sanctioned an indenture system that permitted the forced labor of Native youth that "evolved into a heartless policy of killing Indian parents and kidnapping and indenturing the victim's children."[6] Although the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo promised certain rights, Native Americans in California were denied state citizenship and had no legal means to challenge injustices. Policies that sanctioned indentured labor remained in effect until four years after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, and it was not until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924—just 100 years ago—that California Native Americans were granted U.S. citizenship.[7]

Other state actions worked to exploit Indigenous communities for their land and labor. Unratified treaties with the federal government left many Tribes homeless and subject to vagrancy laws that forced them to work on new settlers' farms.[8] Critical water infrastructure such as the Los Angeles aqueduct was built on stolen land and used forced labor.[9] These types of policies and programs, combined with the violent indoctrination and removal of California Native American Tribes from their homelands, set the stage for discriminatory laws and practices that persist today and continue to result in ecological degradation and biodiversity loss on Tribes' homelands.[10]

In addition to the forced labor of California Native Americans, the "early state government protected the institution of enslavement and greatly limited African Americans' civil rights."[11] The final report of the California Reparations Task Force, released in 2023, documents centuries of forced and exploited labor, racial terror, segregation, and other forms of racial injustice that continue to impact African Americans in California.[12] Public testimony during Reparations Task Force meetings captured specific instances of land loss that included "state-sanctioned terrorization or eminent domain" as well as instances of discrimination against African American families that precluded land access and related opportunities."[13] Local sundown laws excluded African Americans from living in prime agricultural areas in California, and thriving agricultural communities, such as Allensworth, were denied rail and water infrastructure.[14] Racist discrimination combined with land consolidation over the past century led to a 98% reduction in the number of Black farmers between 1920 and 2017 in the U.S.[15]

While individual households and communities navigated discriminatory policies in different ways, recent research points to billions of dollars lost in wealth for California Native Americans and Black communities due to government-enacted dispossession.[16]

> There are many other documented injustices in California related to agricultural land and labor that must be remedied and healed.

There are many other documented injustices in California related to agricultural land and labor that must be remedied and healed. State and federal immigration laws, exclusion acts, and treaties worked to maintain a low-cost supply of agricultural labor while denying property rights on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin.[17] Although the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1948 promised Mexican nationals protection of property and civil rights after Mexico ceded 55 percent of its territory—including present-day California—

many were later met with violent U.S. law enforcement, litigation over their land titles, and land loss.[18] The U.S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920 barring Asian immigrants from buying and leasing agricultural land.[19] In 1942, Executive Order 9066 led to the forced removal and incarceration of more than 122,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast, many of whom were unable to recover their property and businesses afterward.[20]

In 1942, the Bracero Program brought people from Mexico to work as farmworkers in the United States. Bracero Program workers were sprayed with pesticides at the border, denied wages, and treated as disposable.[21] During this time, dominant landowners leveraged racial and power divisions among Mexican, Filipino, and Japanese farmworkers to maintain a racial hierarchy that fostered competition and conflict, further enabling labor exploitation and systemic discrimination.[22] This is one example among many of how migrants to California from Central and South America, China, Japan, India, and the Philippines, among other countries, have faced discrimination and exploitative working conditions while providing the labor, skill, and knowledge that is the foundation for the state's agriculture industry.[23]

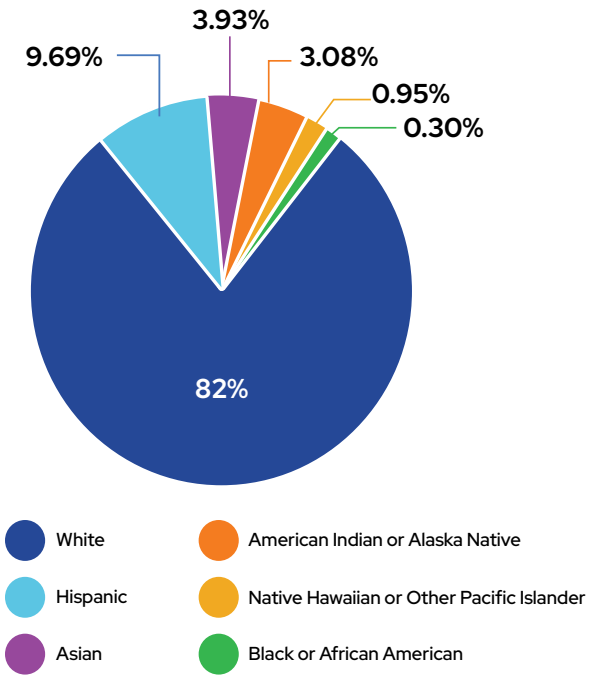
Today, farmworkers in California continue to face exploitative conditions such as wage theft, pesticide exposure, food insecurity, and inhumane living conditions.[24] Women farmworkers face additional risks, including high rates of violence in the field and negative impacts of pesticides on fertility and reproductive health.[25]

These exploitative practices and policies, combined with inherited wealth disparities, historically unjust lending practices, and limited access to support services, continue to obstruct equitable access to agricultural land, fracture communities, and perpetuate cycles of harm that have yet to be fully acknowledged and healed.

The impacts of these disparities are visible in current landownership patterns.[26] According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture,[2] 82% of land in farms in California is owned by producers who identify as "White," while those who identify

2. The 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture has been critiqued for undercounting and misrepresenting agricultural producers and Tribal land stewards in the United States. For example, see Secchi, Silvia. (2025.) "Who is an American farmer? Who counts in American agriculture?." *Agriculture and Human Values*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-025-10781-6

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



as "Hispanic" own just 9.69% of land in farms; those who identify as "Asian" own 3.93%; those who identify as "American Indian or Alaska Native" [inclusive of California Native American Tribes] own 3%; those who identify as "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander" own 0.95%; and those who identify as "Black or African American" own 0.3%. [27]

These demographic trends in landownership differ greatly from those of agricultural labor in California. The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) found that in 2021-22, almost two-thirds (61%) of crop workers were born in Mexico, while 32% were born in the United States or Puerto Rico, 6% were born in Central America, and the remainder originated from various other regions, including South America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.[28] These labor statistics, while valuable, do not fully capture the nuanced identities of agricultural workers in California; for example, Indigenous farmworkers from the Mexican states of Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Michoacán, among others, are very linguistically and ethnically diverse and therefore face unique challenges in navigating cultural and linguistic differences.[29]

Alongside race and ethnicity, gender also significantly impacts agricultural land access and tenure. Among other challenges, "exclusion from networks, difficulty accessing credit, and the tendency of the retiring generation to choose male heirs" have created additional barriers for women producers and land stewards.[30] These disparities are even greater for women who identify as Black, Indigenous, and other women of color.

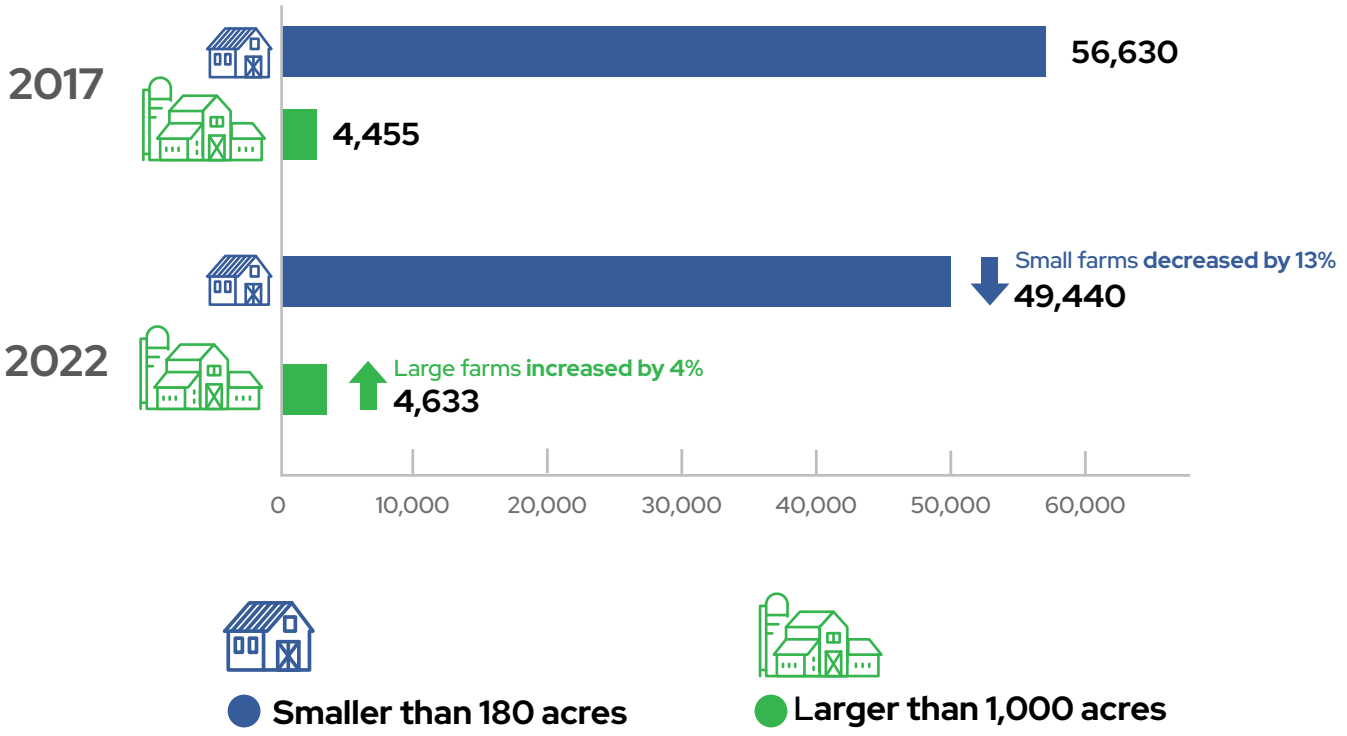
Harvesting strawberries in Santa Maria

Land consolidation and ownership trends

The land equity crisis is driven by the consolidation and financialization of agricultural land and critical natural resources, such as groundwater. California's agricultural land is becoming increasingly concentrated among a small number of large landowners. According to the 2022 USDA. Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in California dropped from 70,521 in 2017 to 63,134 in 2022, while total farmland decreased slightly from 24.5 million to 24.2 million acres.[31]

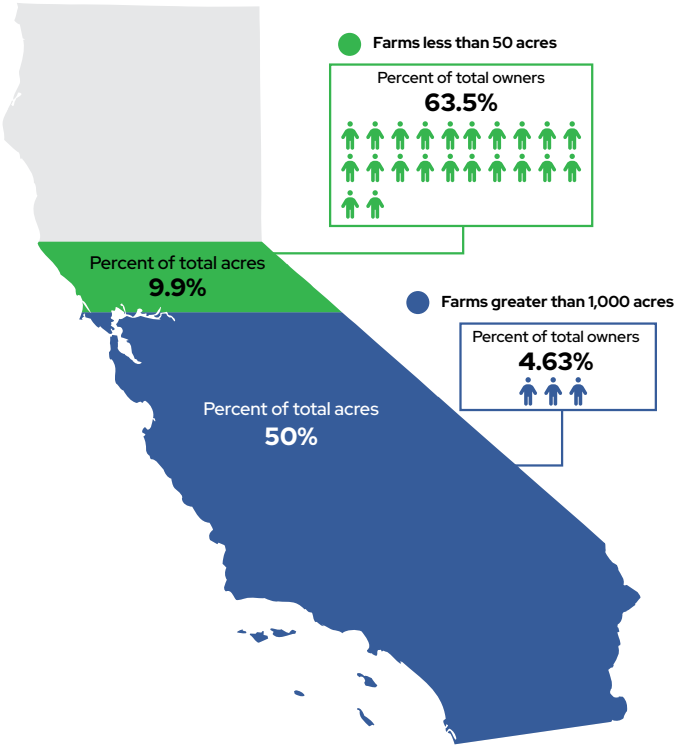
The most significant losses were among small farms under 180 acres, which declined by nearly 13%—a much faster rate than mid-sized farms (operating on 180–999 acres). In contrast, the number of large farms—those over 1,000 acres or generating more than $500,000 in sales—increased by 4%, highlighting a trend toward consolidation.[32]

Number of California farms by farm size in 2017 and 2022



Most of California's producers and land stewards are small-scale. According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, 63.5% of landowners operate on 50 acres or less, yet this majority owns just 9.9% of total cropland acreage in the state.[33] At the other end of the landholding spectrum, just 4.6% of landowners collectively own almost half of the state's total cropland.[34]

Farm size in relation to percent of total owners and percent of total acres of cropland owned in California.



Just 4.6% of landowners collectively own almost half of the state's total cropland.

Similarly, California's water rights have long been unequally distributed.[35] Early state policies extended "first in time, first in right" to new settlers while stripping California Native Americans and other existing residents of claims of right.[36] Because viable agricultural land is largely dependent on consistent access to water, the consolidation of water rights impacts agricultural land access. As California continues working to achieve surface and groundwater sustainability, water rights are even more critical in determining a producer or land steward's success.

Speculative investments in agricultural land have risen substantially across the U.S., accounting for approximately 25% of all sales.

Consolidated control over agricultural land and related resources like water is related to another trend: increased investment in agricultural land by institutional investors and private equity firms. Following the financial crisis of 2007–08, speculative investments in agricultural land have risen substantially across the U.S., accounting for approximately 25% of all sales.[37] In California, between 2011-17, limited liability companies bought 5.7 times as many acres of farmland across the state (192 acres, on average) compared to individual buyers (34 acres, on average).[38]

These firms often have market knowledge and capital that make it impossible for smaller producers and land stewards to compete in real estate transactions. This inequity is compounded by rising prices for agricultural land. Land values

vary significantly across geographies and in relation to other factors like water access and production type.[39] However, the value of farm real estate in California has increased by 28.3% since 2018.[40] 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 year.[41] Prices can be even higher for smaller parcels, especially when located near urban areas, making landownership even more difficult for the majority of California producers who operate on 50 acres or less.

Without a clear strategy to ensure fair and just access to agricultural land in California, these patterns threaten to worsen existing disparities in landownership and secure tenure, resulting in a less economically resilient and ecologically and culturally diverse agricultural sector in California.

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 year.

Farm ownres, technical assistance providers, and Task Force member Lawrence Harlan at Dream Farm in Fresno

Cashew tree in Santa Barbara County

Future benefits of agricultural land equity for all Californians

Ensuring fair opportunities for agricultural land access and secure tenure has collective benefits and is foundational to achieving the state's economic and environmental goals.[42]

Benefits for local businesses and food economies

Agriculture is a cornerstone of California's economy. The California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint calls for strengthening agricultural production in nine of California's 13 regions.[43] Fair and secure access to land is critical to achieving this goal, and various strategies outlined in this report focus on supporting local economies.

Secure land access is foundational for agricultural business success and necessary for the long-term economic viability of rural communities. Equitable access provides opportunities for California's farmworkers and others who aspire to transition to business ownership, while also supporting small-scale operations that play a crucial role in local food networks by providing access to healthy, fresh, and culturally appropriate foods and medicines.[44]

Benefits for healthy and resilient working lands

The health and preservation of California's agricultural land is key to achieving both agricultural land equity and the state's climate and environmental protection goals. Preserving agricultural land prevents its conversion to other uses that may have greater negative ecological and climate impacts, such as residential and industrial development.[45] Agricultural land conservation has also been identified as a key strategy for achieving California's Nature-Based

Solutions Climate Targets.[46] These targets are a major pillar of meeting the state's goals of building climate resilience and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. Additionally, these lands play a role in conserving 30% of California's land by 2030 and enhancing the state's renowned biodiversity.[47]

> When producers and land stewards have secure access to land, they are more able—and more incentivized—to invest time and resources into cultivating healthy ecosystems.

To accomplish long-term ecological benefits, environmental protection, and climate resiliency, priority producers and land stewards must have secure and stable access to the land necessary to invest in sustainable management practices.

Agricultural land equity promotes resilient working lands in several ways. First, returning ancestral lands to California Native American Tribes puts the land back into relationship with those who have stewarded it since time immemorial.[48] Second, placing agricultural land in the hands of producers and land stewards who live and work in the region can limit the consolidation of agricultural land and avoid the potential mismanagement of land and resources held by investment firms focused on short-term, extraction-based gains.[49] Third, meta-analysis shows that smaller agricultural operations, on average, have higher yields and harbor greater crop and non-crop biodiversity at the parcel and landscape scales than do larger operations, resulting in greater economic and ecological resilience.[50]

Agricultural land equity supports long-term, culturally and ecologically meaningful land stewardship by ensuring secure land tenure and empowering those who work the land with responsibility and decision-making. When producers and land stewards have secure access to land, they are more able—and more incentivized—to invest time and resources into cultivating healthy ecosystems and participating in state programs like the **Healthy Soils Program**. Ultimately, secure land tenure is essential for achieving California's environmental goals, including land conservation, climate resilience, and carbon neutrality.

Leavey Ranch stewarded by Blue Lake Rancheria Tribal members in Blue Lake

Recommendations for equitable land access

The recommendations that follow are divided into six sections.

1. Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.

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

Each section begins with an overview that provides context and justification for the specific strategies and actions detailed in the recommendations. A few recommendations reference supplemental information in the Appendix.

The Task Force was established to equitably increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional Tribal agricultural uses. As such, all recommendations included in this report are intended to serve and support priority producers and land stewards, which refers to those who have been historically and systematically excluded from landownership and secure tenure. Unless otherwise specified, all recommendations are directed to the Governor and Legislature of the State of California.

1. Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return

Pauma Tribal Farms in Pauma Valley

California Native American Tribes have specific histories and relationships with the State of California, resulting in a unique set of challenges and opportunities for advancing agricultural land equity. To address this, Section 1 focuses on the specific needs of California Native American Tribes; however, the other sections are also relevant for California Native American Tribes, who should be explicitly included in any action to advance fair access for priority producers and land stewards.

Throughout this report, the term "California Native American Tribes" is used to reference both federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes. There are important legal distinctions between federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes that impact barriers to land access and strategies to overcome them. These differences are noted where relevant. The term "California Native American Tribes" was selected for consistency with language used by state agencies, including in public grant programs. It is important to note that in Task Force meetings and community engagement, other terms were used by Tribal members, including "California Tribal Nations," which conveys the inherent Sovereignty of Native communities and their relations of care since time immemorial with the land that is now called California.

The State of California was founded on the violent removal, coercion, intimidation, and genocide of Indigenous Peoples from the lands and watersheds favored by newly arrived settlers. The forced removal of Indigenous Peoples directly resulted in attempted erasure of traditional languages and traditional knowledge systems from the Pacific West Coast. Erasure of Indigenous Peoples in California was meant to make way for the agriculture industry and newly formed towns, as well as manipulative engineering of watersheds throughout California directly affecting cultural heritage and sacred sites. To this day, California Native American Tribes continue to be excluded from California's coast and waterways.

The State of California was founded on the violent removal, coercion, intimidation, and genocide of Indigenous Peoples from the lands and watersheds favored by newly arrived settlers.

This loss of California Native American Tribes' control and access to ancestral lands is tied to a long history of colonization in California that included Spanish colonization and the mission system.[51] During the secularization of missions in the Mexican period, Tribes were not granted fee title to lands and were only granted use rights.[52] As a result, California Native Americans generally did not have land titles to claim during the transition from Mexican to American rule. In the early American period, the United States did not include Tribes in land claims adjudicated under the 1851 Land Claims Commission Act.[53] In 1851 and 1852, 18 treaties were negotiated to reserve approximately 8.5 million acres of land for approximately 120 villages, bands, and Tribes across the state, but the treaties were not ratified by Congress, a fact that was hidden from Tribes and the public.[54] During this same period, the State of California also sponsored militia campaigns against Tribes, legalized indentured servitude of Tribal members, and limited Native American legal rights, all of which made it nearly impossible for Native Americans to hold title to land.[55]

In 1853, Congress established reservations in far Northern California and Central California, often forcibly relocating California Native American Tribes to newly established reservations, and leaving other Tribes unrecognized.[56] Many California Native Americans who did not relocate to the distant reservations were left landless or were considered squatters on their ancestral lands.[57] Further, because of land loss and new water diversions, California Native Americans were no longer able to gather traditional foods or grow subsistence crops if they refused to relocate to new reservations.[58] While reservations were created for Tribes in inland Southern California, specifically on small parcels that were less attractive to Anglo settlers, no reservations were established along the Southern and Central California coast because of the high value of coastal land.[59] This led to those Tribes being landless, without federal recognition, and without access to the most productive lands.[60]

After the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887, some California reservations were divided into allotments for private ownership by Tribal individuals and families, resulting in significant land loss.[61] Other Native Americans applied for and received public domain allotments as individuals or families (rather than as a Tribe), but the vast majority of those allotments transferred out of Tribal hands, decreasing from 2,552 allotments comprising 336,409 acres in 1960 to an estimated 400 public domain allotments totaling 16,000 acres today.[62]

In 1905, the unratified treaties became public, and the ensuing public outcry led to the establishment of rancherias for the "landless Indians of California."[63] Rancherias, a type of reservation unique to California, were established only in some counties in the central and northern part of the state.[64] In the 1950s, the Rancheria Acts terminated trust status of 46 rancherias, resulting in the division or sale of rancheria land. Since termination, judicial decisions and settlements have restored 27 rancherias and others have been restored through acts of Congress, while many others remain non-federally recognized.[65]

In addition to land loss that severely limited access and control over ancestral lands, the State of California and the federal government discouraged and banned traditional forms of land stewardship while settlers reshaped the California landscape. Landscape-scale changes, like the introduction of Mediterranean grasses and livestock, degraded habitat and decreased the availability of First Foods.[66] Assimilationist policies, including the establishment of Indian boarding schools and bans on traditional and religious practices, also discouraged or banned the use of traditional foods and agricultural practices.[67] Finally, federal fire suppression policy dramatically reduced the use of low-intensity fire on federal forest lands in the Sierra Nevada, which had been used to support the growth of traditional plants.[68]

Today, many California Native American Tribes have little or no access to their ancestral lands, which severely restricts their ability to steward vital ecosystems and practice their cultural and spiritual traditions.

Today, many California Native American Tribes have little or no access to their ancestral lands, which severely restricts their ability to steward vital ecosystems and practice their cultural and spiritual traditions. This lack of access to ancestral lands and waterways has been compounded by laws and policies that have excluded and prohibited Traditional Ecological Knowledge and stewardship from California's landscape. This has had profound cultural, societal, and ecological consequences, severely limiting Tribal communities' ability to follow their traditional lifeways and maintain reciprocal relationships with the land, water, air, and all other forms of life. 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.

> There are presently 109 federally recognized and more than 60 non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes in the state.

California Native American Tribes recognize that beneficial stewardship does not start or stop with land but is inclusive of entire landscapes and ecologies. Land is inseparable from the interconnectivity of all other natural elements, including water, air, and fire. With spiritual reverence and symbiotic stewardship advancements through Traditional Ecological Knowledges, Indigenous Peoples have sustained diverse flourishing watersheds, rivers, coasts, marine habitats, and grasslands since time immemorial, which are all central to food sovereignty and cultural preservation today.

Despite California's history of land theft, intentional erasure and destruction of biodiverse Tribal homelands, and ongoing structural barriers to land access, there are presently 109 federally recognized and more than 60 non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes in the state. Federally recognized California Native American Tribes currently hold 723,700 acres, less than 1% of the state, in reservation lands.[69] In addition, approximately 94,670 acres are owned in fee by California Native American Tribes, with some of those acres funded by state grant programs and actively returned to Tribes under the Newsom Administration.

While this work is a valuable step in the right direction, it does not fully address historical land loss and the continued harms of colonization on Tribal communities. This harm is evident in the difference between current landholdings of federally recognized California Native American Tribes, as captured in the U.S. Census (see table on next page), and the treaties promised by the State of California but never ratified and deliberately hidden.[70] These unratified treaties were the state's first formal attempt to issue land to Tribes as well as the first instance of deceit by the state that continues to impact Tribal communities in California. Recognizing and honoring these treaties is critical to addressing past and continued injustices.

The table that follows presents data from the most recent U.S. Census on federally recognized California Native American Tribes' landholdings and populations. It is essential to note that this data has not been verified by each Tribal Government and thus does not provide a complete or consistent assessment of land holdings or enrollment numbers. For example, these numbers may significantly underestimate population size; the "U.S. Census Bureau estimates that American Indians / Alaska Natives living on reservations or in Native villages were undercounted by nearly 5%, which is more than double the undercount rate of the next closest population group."[71] The census data below should therefore be confirmed with each California Native American Tribe before it is cited or reproduced.

The table does not include data about non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes as there is no single source for landholdings or enrollment numbers for these groups. As outlined above, California's history of land theft, unratified treaties, and systemic exclusion through policy mean that more than 60 California Native American Tribes do not have federal recognition. This historic legacy continues to result in institutionalized erasure, exclusion from resources, and unique barriers to land access and Sovereignty for non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes.

Despite these limitations, the Task Force chose to include the most recently available census data in the table below as important context for the state and the public to understand when considering land return and the state's relationship with California Native American Tribes.

Green house and flowers at the Blue Lake Rancheria Daluviwi' Community Garden in Blue Lake

Federally recognized California Native American Tribes' acres of land and population according to the U.S. Census[72]

CA Native American Tribe census name	Acres of reservation or rancheria land (2024)	Acres in off-reservation trust (2024)	Population (2020)
Agua Caliente	31,457.93	3,780.82	27,090
Alturas	24.86		3
Auburn	69.14	1,074.32	2
Augustine	561.41		0
Barona	6,069.85	1,368.37	756
Benton Paiute	154.51	215.30	84
Berry Creek	38.53	129.43	153
Big Bend	45.15		5
Big Lagoon	5.21		17
Big Pine	277.00	14.83	571
Big Sandy	262.95	77.09	175
Big Valley	119.27		191
Bishop	874.20		1,907
Blue Lake	33.31	57.32	112
Bridgeport	43.31	38.85	46
Cabazon	1,587.66		192
Cahuilla	18,517.01		229
Campo	16,490.17		398
Capitan Grande	15,920.94		0

CA Native American Tribe census name	Acres of reservation or rancheria land (2024)	Acres in off-reservation trust (2024)	Population (2020)
Cedarville	23.25	8.72	19
Chemehuevi	30,815.08		464
Chicken Ranch	10.67	90.76	4
Cold Springs	102.98		79
Colorado River	48,208.03		8,431
Colusa	215.34		91
Cortina	760.53		8
Coyote Valley	85.79		126
Ewiiaapaayp	5,470.24		5
Dry Creek	80.57	18.43	0
Elk Valley	89.25	397.22	100
Enterprise	41.58	41.22	4
Fort Bidwell	3,428.05	84.59	97
Fort Independence	558.79		94
Fort Mojave	6,231.49	52.80	1,697
Fort Yuma	42,654.93		1,876
Greenville	70.35		28
Grindstone	86.22		188
Guidiville	43.35	2.35	63
Hoopa Valley	90,634.93		3,173
Hopland	2,015.27		249

CA Native American Tribe census name	Acres of reservation or rancheria land (2024)	Acres in off-reservation trust (2024)	Population (2020)
Inaja and Cosmit	861.07		0
Ione Band of Miwok	1,345.55		27
Jackson	292.90		0
Jamul	14.71		0
Karuk	16.58	1,067.87	578
La Jolla	8,638.30		145
La Posta	4,092.19		50
Laytonville	194.80		154
Likely	1.54		0
Lone Pine	235.40		242
Lookout	40.37		11
Los Coyotes	25,096.08		15
Lytton	5.08		0
Manchester-Point Arena	376.68		188
Manzanita	4,589.44	2.92	101
Mechoopda	838.84		3,227
Mesa Grande	1,744.19		87
Middletown	120.85		33
Montgomery Creek	76.88		33
Mooretown	32.81	263.12	197
Morongo	34,311.52	526.81	1,243

CA Native American Tribe census name	Acres of reservation or rancheria land (2024)	Acres in off-reservation trust (2024)	Population (2020)
North Fork	66.22	391.19	51
Pala	13,549.60		1,541
Paskenta	2,142.67		6
Pauma and Yuima	6,032.27		179
Pechanga	4,691.23	2,422.70	582
Picayune	69.32	125.21	63
Pinoleville	104.30		142
Pit River	268.72		24
Quartz Valley	605.77	107.70	202
Ramona	546.12		0
Redding	117.49		40
Redwood Valley	270.64		237
Resighini	246.18		33
Rincon	4,017.47	605.37	1,095
Roaring Creek	82.08		19
Robinson	180.87	22.74	233
Rohnerville (Rancheria)	182.12		208
Round Valley	7,495.27	15,690.92	454
San Manuel	1,114.55		137
San Pasqual	1,416.16	584.77	1,270

CA Native American Tribe census name	Acres of reservation or rancheria land (2024)	Acres in off-reservation trust (2024)	Population (2020)
Santa Rosa	400.42		898
Santa Rosa	11,384.86		131
Santa Ynez	155.52		264
Santa Ysabel	14,992.50		263
Sherwood Valley	351.63	143.52	208
Shingle Springs	158.63	91.15	108
Smith River	162.32	48.31	160
Soboba	6,470.11	1,500.62	567
Stewarts Point	42.45	508.30	86
Sulphur Bank	53.64		46
Susanville	1,024.35	369.54	570
Sycuan	637.60	1,638.58	218
Table Bluff	75.50		120
Table Mountain	91.77	723.03	24
Timbi-Sha Shoshone	1,721.78	334.48	25
Rumsey	482.97		41
Torres-Martinez	31,955.62	194.25	3,454
Trinidad	57.06	34.49	137
Tule River	53,897.72	50.97	1,250
Tuolumne	380.49		154
Twenty-Nine Palms	406.61	50.84	5

CA Native American Tribe census name	Acres of reservation or rancheria land (2024)	Acres in off-reservation trust (2024)	Population (2020)
Upper Lake	476.27		70
Viejas	1,605.13	91.60	538
Washoe Ranches	278.46		3,223
Woodfords	390.11		225
XL Ranch	9,760.41		117
Yurok	55,949.03		1,236

In 2019, Governor Newsom issued **Executive Order N-15-19** to formally apologize for and recognize that the State of California "sanctioned over a century of depredations and prejudicial policies against California Native Americans." This order, along with institutional commitments like Governor Newsom's Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands,[73] are early steps of a much longer process to address historical injustices that persist today. In the context of these persistent barriers to landownership and access that arose from intentional exclusion and land theft, a cohesive, long-term commitment and response from the state is required.

Ancestral land return restores access to cultural resources such as medicines, plants, and animals, and enables California Native American Tribes to restore native ecosystems and ceremonial grounds, boost soil health, and increase biodiversity. Importantly, land return also restores access to sacred sites and ancestral village sites that otherwise continue to be destroyed by development.

The recommendations that follow are informed by conversations with Tribal Leaders and members who have consistently emphasized the importance of land return without restrictions, encumbrances, or other requirements. This will require identifying legally feasible approaches to reduce, remove, and prevent restrictions on land to respect Tribal Sovereignty. Effective consultation and communication with California Native American Tribes must be foundational to all land return efforts.

Ancestral land return restores access to cultural resources such as medicines, plants, and animals, and enables California Native American Tribes to restore native ecosystems and ceremonial grounds, boost soil health, and increase biodiversity.

Deep Seeded Community Farm in Arcata

1.1 Establish an Ancestral Land Return Fund

a) Develop an Ancestral Land Return Fund for California Native American Tribes to acquire agricultural land, as defined in this report, within their ancestral territories.

   i) Provide sustained funding through continuous appropriation.
   ii) Include support for responding to first opportunity to purchase (3.2) or right of first refusal (1.3.c) opportunities when land becomes available.
   iii) Align and increase funding to existing state programs that support ancestral land return, acquisition, and co-management projects, including removing restrictions on Sovereignty associated with conservation easements, such as requiring public access.
   iv) Establish other funding pathways to incentivize and support land trusts and private individuals to transfer land to California Native American Tribes (see 2.3).

Consistently emphasized the importance of land return without restrictions, encumbrances, or other requirements.

b) Utilize the Ancestral Land Return Fund to support awardees with the following activities and costs:

   i) Land acquisition and associated costs.
      1. Allow the use of a third party, such as a land trust or local government, to serve as a temporary intermediary to purchase and hold land until it can be returned to California Native American Tribes in accordance with agreed-upon processes and timelines.
   ii) Specialized real estate agent services to reduce the burden and up-front costs of private land return for California Native American Tribes.
   iii) Costs associated with restoring and stewarding land and related needs, such as reservoirs, groundwater storage, wells, surface-water infrastructure, and other infrastructure projects.
   iv) Technical assistance and legal aid to federally recognized California Native American Tribes working to convert fee land to trust land.
      1. Exempt California Native American Tribes from property taxes in the interim (see 2.5).
   v) Legal and technical assistance with navigating deeds, titles, water rights, succession plans, and trusts, with specific support focused on consolidating ownership of highly fractionated lands—modeled on the USDA's Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program.[74]
   vi) Assessment of access challenges for landlocked parcels to identify necessary legal and infrastructure investments.
   vii) Costs associated with the acquisition of easements and development of access roads and rights of way to landlocked parcels.

c) Design of the Ancestral Land Return Fund should include the following activities and considerations:

   i) Targeted and culturally appropriate outreach, timelines, and procedures.
   ii) Specific evaluation and accountability tools that will ensure the program is effectively providing a pathway for ancestral land return.
   iii) Mechanisms for applicants to apply and gain pre-approval for funding before a specific parcel is identified to expedite the purchase process when an opportunity arises.
   iv) Opportunities to leverage investments with philanthropy and other related groups.

"There is a healing element that comes with land return and restored access to village sites. This is what will help us heal and make us stronger."

Tribal Engagement Session at
Golden Eagle Farm

1.2 Embed ancestral land return for California Native American Tribes in the state's policies and programs

a) As appropriate, conduct government-to-government consultation with California Native American Tribes as the first step in policy and program design.

b) Create a Tribal Lands Equity Advisory Council tasked with guiding implementation of this report's recommendations, advising on evolving needs, and ensuring accountability over time.

c) Establish and fund a Tribal Land Return guiding body composed of regionally diverse delegates of federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes.

    i) Co-develop the roles, responsibilities, and governance structure through consultation with federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes, and build on the ideas put forth by the Truth and Healing Council.
    ii) Task the Tribal Land Return guiding body with the following:
        1. Advise and oversee the creation of a statewide goal for acres of both publicly and privately held land returned to California Native American Tribes.
        2. Collaborate with local and state agencies to identify parcels of high priority public land and establish pathways for land return.

d) Ensure all state conservation and agriculture policies and programs include Traditional Ecological Knowledge and First Foods and allow flexibility for diverse Tribal stewardship practices by acting on input from consultation (1.2.a), the Tribal Lands Equity Advisory Council (1.2.b), and the Tribal Land Return guiding body (1.2.c)

e) Identify and amend policies, regulations, and laws to remove barriers and burdens associated with ancestral land return and access for California Native American Tribes, including those that impose the following:

    i) Covenants, encumbrances, or other

restrictions on Tribal Sovereignty, such as requiring public access, on land that is returned or acquired.

ii) Burdensome fees, taxes, or requirements for a limited waiver of sovereign immunity.

iii) Requirements for agencies to sell land (acquired with certain funding sources or for certain purposes) at fair market rate, such as **Streets and Highway Code**, Article 3, section 118.1.

f) Protect California Tribal village sites and cultural landscapes, like traditional food groves, watersheds, and ceremonial sites, by enforcing existing laws such as the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (CalNAGPRA, **AB 978**, 2001), **AB 52** (2014), and **SB 18** (2004).

g) Provide funding for land use consultation practices under **SB 18** (2004) and **AB 52** (2014) to increase California Native American Tribes' capacity to participate in land use decisions.

h) Provide additional funding and resources to increase capacity of state agencies that are working to conduct land return to facilitate effective collaboration with California Native American Tribes.

Hukama Farm in Ramona

Case Study: Golden Eagle Farm's fee-to-trust transfer

In February 2025, Mesa Grande Band of Diegueño Mission Indians, a federally recognized California Native American Tribe, successfully converted 480 acres of the 560-acre Golden Eagle Farm from fee simple into trust status. This was a significant milestone which advanced reparations toward Tribal land equity, Sovereignty, and legal and cultural controls. While there are various entities dedicated to assisting federally recognized California Native American Tribes with fee-to-trust transfers, the process is immensely bureaucratic, expensive, and time-intensive. Tribes face hurdles and red tape at every step.

Golden Eagle Farm in Ramona

In the context of California Native American Tribes, trust land is land held by the federal government for the benefit of a federally recognized Tribe. Trust land is under the sovereign control of a federally recognized Tribe and is not subject to state jurisdiction. This form of land ownership is unavailable to non-federally recognized Tribes. Fee land is land under the complete control of the title holder, but unlike trust land, fee land is subject to state and local laws and regulations, zoning ordinances, and property taxes.

Two of the most significant time and financial costs the Mesa Grande Band incurred were completing the required land survey due to boundary discrepancies within the county's maps and hiring an attorney that specialized in fee-to-trust transfers. Because of these financial and bureaucratic barriers, applications can take decades to complete. The time and cost associated with this complex process can prohibit California Native American Tribes from utilizing federal trust responsibility funding for other greatly needed community support programs.

While fee-to-trust transfers are one important tool to uplift California Native American Tribes' Sovereignty and their right to equitable use of their traditional homelands, additional resources and technical assistance are needed— as outlined section 1.1.b.

1.3 Return publicly held land to California Native American Tribes

a) Coordinate with federal agencies to support the return of federally owned lands to California Native American Tribes.

b) Transfer state-owned lands to California Native American Tribes, beginning with lands that were promised under treaties, in a way that uplifts and never impedes Tribal Sovereignty, including but not limited to the following actions:

   i) Remove the requirement to waive sovereign immunity by providing legislative guidance or guidance from the State Attorney General establishing alternative mechanisms to ensure public benefit.
   ii) Remove restrictions on Sovereignty associated with conservation easements, including the requirement to allow public access.

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.

   i) Fund the development of templates and model language for right of first refusal agreements.
   ii) To ensure feasibility and efficacy of the new policies, amend **California Constitution**, Article XVI, Section 3 to exempt the grant or donation of property to California Native American Tribes by the state.

d) Update the **California Surplus Land Act** to support ancestral land return.
   i) Expand Government Code 54220 to declare the importance of returning ancestral lands to California Native American Tribes and that surplus lands, prior to disposition, should be considered for transfer to a California Native American Tribe.
   ii) Add Tribal uses to the existing list of approved "exempt surplus land" types for local agencies, as outlined in the Surplus Land Act Guidelines.
   iii) Ensure California Native American Tribes are included in the government-to-government land transfer exemption as it relates to Government code section 54221 (f)(1)(D).
   iv) When a local government transfers land to a California Native American Tribe by establishing a co-management agreement and/or Land Back agreement, this transfer should be exempt from the Surplus Land Act.

What is the Surplus Land Act?

The Surplus Land Act aims to make local public land that is considered "surplus," or no longer needed for government purposes, available for affordable housing. The Program Guidelines outline priority uses for surplus land, notification procedures, and exemptions to the policy. For more information, see "**Surplus local land for affordable housing**" from the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

1.4 Enable and promote the implementation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural practices

a) Remove barriers to the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) on public and private lands, including cultural fire, which has been prohibited through state policy for centuries.

    i) For example, to enable the use of cultural fire in alignment with SB 310 (2024), explore ways to address barriers resulting from differing liability between state agencies.

b) Fund efforts to share and implement Tribally led Traditional Ecological Knowledge in culturally meaningful ways, including place-based Tribal stewardship practices that cultivate a wide variety of First Foods (including plants, fungi, and wildlife), fibers, medicines, and cultural resources, and promote the intergenerational transfer of land-based knowledge.

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.

    i) Incentivize and support local governments to adopt these model ordinances and modify their zoning codes to allow for traditional Tribal uses and cultural land management.

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).

e) Prioritize Tribal stewardship and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in coastal areas through the following:

    i) Acknowledge Tribal Sovereignty by mandating local, state, and federal governing bodies incorporate California Native American Tribes in decision-making over coastal areas.
    ii) Facilitate Tribal stewardship through ownership, co-management, and access agreements to ensure California Native American Tribes have access to their homelands along the coast.
    iii) Require agencies that provide resources and support for coastal land management, including relevant forms of production such as aquaculture and mariculture, to:
        1. Make these resources accessible to California Native American Tribes by enhancing partnerships and prioritizing cultural humility.
        2. Include Tribal voices and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in their processes and procedures.
    iv) Expand efforts for Tribal involvement that are modeled on the effective development of the Kelp Restoration and Management Plan by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

v) Fund capacity-building among California Native American Tribes to access tools, such as Traditional Cultural Properties, to formally recognize and protect cultural landscapes and village sites on the coast that are currently unrecognized.

vi) Establish an education campaign to highlight the history of displaced and landless California Native American Tribes on the coast and their continued exclusion from these areas

From left to right: Task Force Vice Chair Emily Burgueno and Task Force members Thea Rittenhouse, Lawrence Harlan, Dorian Payán, and Darlene Franco at the Blue Lake Rancheria Daluviwi' Community Garden in Blue Lake

The composition of California's agricultural landholders is expected to change drastically in the coming decades. By 2035, 40% of privately held agricultural land is expected to change hands as landowners age out of farming and retire.[75] Without a clear vision and plan, this transition in landownership could worsen existing patterns of urban development and land consolidation in ways that negatively impact California's agricultural communities.[76] On the other hand, this moment can and must be leveraged to expand land access for a new generation of producers and land stewards.

This moment can and must be leveraged to expand land access for a new generation of producers and land stewards.

As with the recommendations in Section 1, Section 2 offers various pathways by which to address past harms and current disparities through facilitating fair opportunities and tailored support for land acquisition among those who have been historically excluded. The "Historical injustices and contemporary disparities" section of this report outlines the complex historical and continuing harms that have led to the current inequities in land access and ownership in California, including but not limited to the following:

- The violent removal and forced labor of California Native American Tribes.[77]
- Racially motivated land takings, exclusionary laws, and discriminatory lending practices that forced African American farmers in California from their land.[78]
- The forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, resulting in significant loss of agricultural property and businesses.[79]
- Immigration laws, exclusion acts, and exploitative labor policies and practices that maintained a low-cost supply of farm labor while denying property rights on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin.[80]

85% of those who responded to the Land Access Experiences Survey indicated that the cost of land is very or extremely challenging.

Land Access Experiences Survey Report

(full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

This section establishes targeted funding pathways, policy change, technical assistance, and associated outreach and education campaigns for communities in California who have been excluded from agricultural landownership and secure tenure.

This Section establishes targeted funding pathways, policy change, technical assistance, and associated outreach and education campaigns for communities in California who have been excluded from agricultural landownership and secure tenure. It also calls for reserving funds for people in California who themselves experienced or are descendants of individuals who experienced enslavement, racially motivated land takings, or exploitative labor conditions.

In particular, African Americans in California face continued exclusion and erasure, even from efforts meant to advance equity. For this reason, it is critical to ensure that this fund offers specific outreach and pathways for African Americans living in California alongside targeted outreach to other priority communities.

Funding is a critical part of ensuring equitable agricultural land access. In 2022, the cost of farm real estate (land and structures) increased to an average of $12,000 per acre, a 10.1% increase from one year before.[81] Land costs are subject to regional variability, but nonetheless, land values across the state put ownership out of reach for many land seekers.

The high cost of acquiring agricultural land presents a major barrier for priority producers and land stewards who continue to face systemic discrimination that limits their access to financing and equitable land ownership opportunities. During the Task Force's engagement with communities across California (see Appendix E for details), priority producers and land stewards shared countless stories of facing discrimination by financial institutions and landowners and explained how the eligibility criteria for existing loan products do not match the realities of beginning, small-scale, and lower-revenue operations. The resulting exclusion from these products and programs further limits priority producers' and land stewards' ability to purchase land.

The high cost of acquiring agricultural land presents a major barrier for priority producers and land stewards who continue to face systemic discrimination that limits their access to financing and equitable land ownership opportunities.

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

Many engagement session participants and survey respondents described the importance of support for finding and obtaining land paired with business guidance and improved access to capital through loans and other financial opportunities. This need was especially acute for California farmworkers and others who aspire to transition to business ownership.

In addition to challenges with accessing finance and technical assistance for business development, there are many other barriers to land acquisition that must be addressed to ensure fair opportunities for land access. As shared by the producers and land stewards who engaged with the Task Force, these included:

- Racism among land sellers and agents who privilege white buyers.
- Lack of real estate, legal, and financial expertise required to successfully navigate purchasing agricultural land.
- Lack of knowledge on how and where to search for available agricultural land.
- Language barriers that prevent effective communication with landholders.
- Concern about negotiating a fair deal.
- Lack of transparency regarding who owns the land, when a parcel will be sold, and whether the land that is sold will remain in agriculture.
- The fast-paced land transactions that disadvantage buyers who lack resources to track market trends and cannot anticipate a sale or make an offer.
- Particular barriers for farmworkers who may have many years of experience but may face linguistic or citizenship barriers or whose experience is not recognized as qualifying for a loan.

These barriers require tailored support that meets the specific needs of diverse producers and land stewards. While the state currently offers some resources to support producers and land stewards with land acquisition, they are limited in scope and scale, and in almost all cases, the demand outpaces available funding (see Appendix G for a list of existing programs and resources related to agricultural land equity in California). The recommendations that follow establish tailored forms of financial and technical assistance, both of which are required to move the state beyond acknowledging past and ongoing disparities to addressing them.

> Equitable land access is not just about acquiring acres—it requires removing systemic barriers, tailoring resources to diverse farming communities, and building a supportive policy environment where small farmers can thrive.
>
> Farmer participants, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) Focus Group
>
> (full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

Case Study: Kern County Black Farmers Association call for tailored resources

During the Task Force's engagement session with the Kern County Black Farmers Association, farmers, landowners, and those seeking to restore access to agricultural land described past and ongoing injustices, including land theft, systematic exclusion from land access, and ever-changing rules intended to prevent African American producers from thriving on the land.

As a result, most participants in the session were currently operating on small plots in backyards or churches. These small-scale producers shared how their operations are rendered illegal through zoning limitations, constantly changing rules and regulations, restricted water access, and the prohibition of agricultural sales from residential lots. The farmers and advocates described how model zoning policies are needed to ensure respect for and awareness of urban farming, alleviate the permitting burden, and fast track support for urban agriculture projects (6.2).

At the same time, many participants shared their ambition to scale up and acquire additional land to grow their businesses. However, they face financial and technical hurdles at every step.

Participants described the need for equitable financing for land acquisition, along with legal and technical assistance for navigating deeds, resolving title and water rights issues, and facilitating land succession. Collectively, they strongly emphasized that support must include long-term, targeted, and culturally appropriate outreach to African Americans—who are often excluded and left behind when public resources are designed to reach underserved communities at large (2.1). The engagement session host closed the session with a reminder of what equitable access to land means to her: "As others erase our history, we tell our own stories and reclaim Black farming as both our rightful heritage and a dignified pathway to prosperity."

As others erase our history, we tell our own stories and reclaim Black farming as both our rightful heritage and a dignified pathway to prosperity.

Members of the African American Farmers of California and Task Force member Liya Schwartzman at Scott Family Farm in Fresno

2.1 Establish a Restorative Land Fund

a) Develop a Restorative Land Fund that is accessible to priority producers and land stewards who wish to acquire, maintain ownership, and establish tenure on land in California for agricultural use.

   i) Provide sustained funding through continuous appropriation.
   ii) Include a set-aside within the fund that is accessible to applicants who themselves experienced or who are descendants of people who experienced documented harm, including enslavement, racially motivated land takings, or exploitative labor conditions. Ensure a specific pathway for African Americans living in California who are descendants of persons enslaved in the United States, building from structures established in **AB 437 (2025)** and **SB 518 (2025)**.

b) Utilize the Restorative Land Fund to support awardees with the following activities and costs:

   i) Land acquisition for agricultural use and associated costs.
      1. Allow intermediary organizations that serve priority producers and land stewards to hold the land temporarily, under contract, if needed, until the recipient is ready for the land transition to occur.
      2. Support priority producers and land stewards in responding to first opportunity to purchase (3.2) or right of first refusal (1.3.c) opportunities when land becomes available.
   ii) Costs associated with identifying and closing on land purchases, including realtors and lender fees, initial deposits and considerations, land and infrastructure assessments, inspections, insurance, taxes, and appropriate testing of soils, and water quality and sources.
   iii) Costs associated with starting and

Task Force member Thea Rittenhouse, her colleague, and their site visit host at Tijuana River Valley incubator plots in San Diego

maintaining an agricultural operation, including water access and infrastructure improvements.

iv) Legal and technical assistance for navigating deeds, titles, water rights, succession plans, and trusts, with specific support for resolving heirs' landownership, as modeled on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Heirs Property Relending Program. [82]

v) Legal and technical assistance for awardees to develop appropriate business and governance plans, including cooperative and community landownership structures.

c) Design of the Restorative Land Fund should include the following activities and considerations:

i) Targeted and culturally appropriate outreach, timelines, and procedures, with particular attention to the needs of African American communities.

ii) Specific evaluation and accountability tools that will ensure the program is effectively addressing historically documented harm.

iii) Eligibility for cooperatives governed by producers and farmworkers who co-own and co-steward land.

iv) Mechanisms for applicants to apply and gain pre-approval for funding before a specific parcel is identified to expedite the purchase process when an opportunity arises.

v) Opportunities to leverage investments with philanthropy and other related groups.

vi) Consult with California Native American Tribes whose ancestral territory includes the land under consideration for acquisition to ensure that land acquired through this fund is not in conflict with any ancestral land return efforts.

2.2. Develop and implement a public education campaign to document past and ongoing harm

a) Fund research to identify and document the harms perpetrated against priority producers and land stewards that require restitution through the Restorative Land Fund, modeled on the California Reparations Report.

b) Fund the development and distribution of educational materials that highlight California's unique history of enslavement, land takings, exploitative labor conditions, and other racially motivated injustices that shape current inequities.

i) Develop a constructive reparations framework to guard against past harms being repeated in the future.

ii) Adapt the educational materials for inclusion in relevant state-mandated school curricula and require inclusion in the California Department of Education's **guidance and framework**.

Case Study: Barriers and opportunities for loan access

Simon-Luke Aquino of Applai Tribe Farm and Garden grows and propagates starts at four small plots across San Diego County and wishes to acquire land to expand his operation. Avocado orchards in Simon's community are sold at prices he cannot afford and then cleared by the new landowner for residential development.

Despite having ten years of farming experience, formal education, technical advisors, community support, and a business plan, Simon was denied a loan due to a lack of formal documentation of managerial experiences, payroll, and finances.

Simon shared that these misaligned eligibility criteria of available loan programs can easily exclude small and beginning farmers even if they have the necessary desire, experience, and qualifications to be successful.

Simon envisions a pilot loan program with more accessible and appropriate eligibility criteria that could be used to generate data on alternative lending models while protecting at-risk agricultural land and supporting small and beginning farmers, at once (2.4).

Farm owner at Applai Tribe Farm & Garden in San Diego

2.3 Provide funding for the purchase of agricultural land to be leased or transferred to priority producers and land stewards

a) Fund organizations that directly benefit priority producers and land stewards to purchase and then lease or transfer agricultural land to priority producers and land stewards.

   i) Eligible applicants must have a proven track record of working with and directly benefiting priority producers and land stewards and may include Resource Conservation Districts, land trusts, nonprofits, California Native American Tribes, and tribal-led or serving organizations. Require applicants to demonstrate their commitment through community letters of support.
   ii) Exempt awarded California Native American Tribes from the requirement to lease or transfer land acquired through the fund to another entity.
   iii) Prioritize community agricultural projects that facilitate long-term stewardship and tenure of the land by priority producers and land stewards, including cooperatives governed by producers and farmworkers who co-own and co-steward land.

b) Encourage, incentivize, and strengthen conservation tools that conserve agricultural land, such as buy-protect-sell+ programs, while prioritizing equitable and affordable land access. Require that priority producers and land stewards are prioritized for the lease or transfer of these properties.

2.4 Establish loan and debt forgiveness programs

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 land stewards who are often excluded from available finance.

   i) Provide down payment assistance, including grants or 0% interest loans, to first-time buyers and landless applicants to improve access to conventional loans and other available finance for land acquisition.
   ii) Establish a pilot program for priority producers and land stewards that supports land purchase. The pilot should experiment with eligibility criteria and qualifications tailored to priority producers and land stewards and use the results to generate data on alternative lending models.
   iii) Administer loans through qualified financial institutions with agricultural knowledge and experience serving priority producers and land stewards, including Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and other mission-forward lenders.
   iv) Ensure eligibility for cooperatives governed by producers and land stewards who co-own and co-steward land.

b) Establish a debt forgiveness program modeled on the federal **Public Service Loan Forgiveness program** for priority producers and land stewards to alleviate debt incurred for agricultural operations, conditional on the implementation of practices funded through the California Department of Food and Agriculture's climate- and regenerative agriculture-focused programs or Traditional Ecological Knowledge practices, as defined in the glossary (Appendix A).

   i) Ensure eligibility for cooperatives governed by producers and land stewards who co-own and co-steward land.

What is an Aggie Bond?

Established through federal-state partnerships, Aggie Bonds make interest on private loans to beginning farmers and ranchers exempt from federal and/or state taxes. This enables private lenders to offer loans with lower interest rates. According to the Council of Development Finance Agencies, Aggie Bonds can reduce interest rates for beginning farmers and ranchers by one to three percent, on average, compared to the commercial farm loan rate. Private lenders assume all liability for loans created under an Aggie Bond program. Multiple states already have Aggie Bond programs, including Oregon, Minnesota, and Iowa.

2.5 Adopt new tax programs and benefits designed to serve priority producers and land stewards

a) Support successful agricultural land succession by revising existing tax law to enable and encourage the transition of land during retiring producers' and land stewards' lifetimes.

b) Create an Aggie Bond program—a federal-state partnership that allows private lenders to receive tax-exempt interest on loans made to beginning farmers and ranchers—to support fair financial institutions in reducing interest rates for priority producers and land stewards.[83]

c) Establish state tax credits designed to support priority producers and land stewards regardless of their landownership status, such as tax relief on student loans, insurance, and infrastructure expenses.

d) Establish a state tax credit for landowners who lease, sell, or donate land to priority producers and land stewards.

   i) Provide additional incentives for selling or leasing at lower-than-market value, committing to leases of at least five years in length, and leasing with purchase options or a right of first refusal.
   ii) Allow for both the landowner and tenant to receive the same tax benefit for a given plot of land.

e) Exempt California Native American Tribes from otherwise applicable property taxes on land in the process of transferring from fee to trust land.

Note: 2.5.f and the "What is COIN?" text box have not been approved for inclusion in the final report and will be considered at the December 11 Task Force meeting.

f) Direct the California Organized Investment Network (COIN) to prioritize projects that contribute to secure land tenure and ownership for priority producers and land stewards to channel low-cost capital toward supporting agricultural businesses and projects in low-income and rural communities.

What is COIN?

The **California Organized Investment Network** (COIN) is an established program in the California Department of Insurance that incentivizes insurance companies to invest in projects that deliver environmental and social benefits to rural, reservation-based, and low-to-moderate income (LMI) households and communities in California. Examples of **currently supported projects** include the **Healthy Food Financing Initiative**, which promotes access to healthy food across California by financing the distribution and retail of fresh food in areas designated as food deserts or Food Opportunity Areas, and **Agriculture Capital** (ACM Fund II, LLC), which cultivates a regenerative food and agriculture system by producing higher-quality food at scale, generating market-competitive returns for investors, and positively impacting local communities.

2.6 Continually evaluate and improve funding and incentive programs

a) Expand the California Grants Portal to provide an evergreen list of available public and philanthropic programs that fund agricultural land access and secure tenure. Ensure this resource list is available in different languages and links to websites with details about funders and successful applicants.

b) Implement recommendations from the California Department of Food and Agriculture's BIPOC and Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committees regarding application, eligibility, reporting requirements, and cost-share requirements for conservation and land-based programs, such as the **State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP)**, the **Healthy Soils Program (HSP)**, the **Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)**, and the **California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP)**.

c) Ensure existing grant programs related to land access, stewardship, and tenure are responsive to specific communities and needs by including the following elements. Adjust statute and regulatory requirements as necessary.

   i) Adopt funding models that leverage investments with philanthropy and other related groups.
   ii) Administer funds using block grants.
   iii) Ensure eligible activities and grant terms are flexible and include a wide range of needs associated with land stewardship.
   iv) Establish permanent sources of funding and offer long-term support to grantees.
   v) Provide access to technical assistance.
   vi) Remove the requirement for a waiver of

sovereign immunity by providing legislative guidance or guidance from the State Attorney General that establishes alternative mechanisms to ensure public benefit.

vii) Require at least 40% of program funds be set aside to support priority producers and land stewards.

viii) Improve accessibility and reduce application-related burdens by drafting guidelines and contracts in plain language.

ix) Acknowledge and address the specific needs of African American producers and land stewards during both the application and award periods.

d) Mandate standardized program evaluation metrics for land access programs and require annual interagency collaboration to review and address findings (see also 4.1).

   i) Develop tools and processes to avoid burdensome reporting and administrative requirements for applicants and community-based organizations to provide block grants and technical assistance.

   ii) Evaluation metrics may include:

      1. Information about applicants, awardees, and land stewards involved in the awarded projects, including optional demographic questions.
      2. Geography.
      3. Acres impacted.
      4. Dollars invested.
      5. Number of producers and land stewards impacted.
      6. Length of lease and other tenure variables.

e) Improve community assessment tools, such as **CalEnviroScreen**, that measure environmental, social, and economic needs statewide to more effectively account for historical harms and present-day disparities in agricultural communities, as outlined in this report, and ensure fair and representative access to funding.[84]

> When revising existing programs to better align with equity goals, it's important to make them work better for small-scale, socially disadvantaged producers, who currently have a much harder time implementing state grant-funded projects than larger farms do and may be subject to a greater level of scrutiny because their projects are less cookie cutter.
>
> Technical Assistance Provider, UCANR Interview Series
>
> (full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

2.7 Expand tailored technical assistance for land access and acquisition

a) Provide funding to technical assistance providers who assist priority producers and land stewards with the following services:

   i) Advice and guidance on land access and acquisition.
   ii) 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 barriers to secure land tenure.
   iii) Land-linking services that help connect landowners and land seekers, inclusive of the following activities:
      1. Improve and maintain land listing portals and add available properties across the state on an ongoing basis.
      2. Offer capacity building for regional land-linking staff to partner with counties and local governments.
      3. Support both parties with the development of fair purchase agreements and secure and equitable lease agreements, including those providing a pathway to ownership and options for seller financing.

b) Provide funding to technical assistance providers to increase regional coordination and capacity to better serve priority producers and land stewards.

c) Increase support for technical assistance providers who serve priority producers and land stewards in more effective, thorough, and equitable ways by funding services that:

   i) Are offered in diverse languages, demonstrate cultural humility, include digital technology support, and are responsive to unique regional needs.
   ii) Support farmworkers and beginning producers and land stewards in transitioning to agricultural business ownership and operations.
   iii) 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.

d) Advance the statutory obligations established in **AB 2377** (1995) by establishing a separate, continuous funding source and increasing the amount allocated to CDFA to support technical assistance for all its grant programs.

   i) Enact legislation modeled on **AB 2377** (1995) to require other agencies and departments to fund technical assistance to increase grant program access.

3. Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation

Deep Seeded Community Farm in Arcata

The land equity crisis is driven by the consolidation and financialization of agricultural land and critical natural resources, such as groundwater. California's agricultural sector has long been marked by inequitable landownership, a trend that has escalated in recent decades.[85] In Fresno County, one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country, the situation is especially severe, with recent research showing that the largest 10% of owners control 73% of the farmland.[86]

The land equity crisis is driven by the consolidation and financialization of agricultural land and critical natural resources, such as groundwater.

Land consolidation has profound social, economic, and ecological consequences for agricultural communities. As small- and mid-sized farms are replaced by fewer, larger operations, research indicates a decline in local employment opportunities, reduced circulation of capital within local economies, and weakened civic engagement and social cohesion—all of which erode economic and community resilience.[87] In addition, the consolidation of agricultural land and related resources is also associated with negative environmental and health outcomes, including "excessive water use, monoculture, and food insecurity, reducing consumer choices, raising food prices, and threatening the resilience of the food system."[88]

In recent years, land consolidation has combined with financialization to change the landscape of agricultural landownership in California. The term "financialization" describes when "farms are being targeted for finance-sector investment and increasingly valued for their ability to produce financial profits" rather than food, cultural resources, and community benefits.[89] Increasingly, institutional investors and private equity firms, ranging from pension funds and university endowments to private foundations and "high-net-worth individuals," are treating California's invaluable agricultural land as an investment object like any other, with wide-ranging impacts on California's agricultural communities.[90]

These trends in agricultural land consolidation and financialization threaten to worsen existing disparities in land access arising from centuries of discriminatory policies and practices that have taken both land and generational wealth from priority producers and land stewards.

These trends in agricultural land consolidation and financialization threaten to worsen existing disparities in land access arising from centuries of discriminatory policies and practices that have taken both land and generational wealth from priority producers and land stewards. Addressing these historic and contemporary conditions requires innovative, well-enforced measures to ensure fair access and acquisition opportunities.

The recommendations in this Section offer restrictions and incentives that will halt, mitigate, and reverse patterns of land consolidation to ensure that producers and land stewards who wish to steward California's agricultural land into

the future have fair opportunity to access land and create viable agricultural livelihoods in California.

3.1 Limit agricultural landownership by investment companies

a) Adopt a "farmland for farmers" law that limits pension funds and investment companies from purchasing agricultural land, informed by proposed federal legislation **S.2583 - Farmland for Farmers Act of 2023**. Include enforcement mechanisms to ensure the law is implemented as intended.

b) Institute an agricultural landownership fee on pension funds and investment companies and use the revenue to support the agricultural land acquisition funds (1.1 and 2.1) and the California Producer Retirement Fund (3.3) proposed in this report. Develop effective fee structures in consultation with agricultural producers and land stewards, California Native American Tribes, public agencies, and economists.

Note: 3.1.c and 3.1.d have not been approved for inclusion in the final report and will be considered at the December 11 Task Force meeting.

c) Enhance the capacity of the California Attorney General's Office to investigate and enforce potential antitrust violations relevant to ownership of agricultural land, groundwater resources, and any other categories where anticompetitive behavior might affect California's agricultural industry.

d) Fund research and a public report of recommendations evaluating the feasibility and potential efficacy of the following mechanisms to limit land consolidation by hedge funds, pension funds, and other financial entities:

   i) Enforcing state and federal antitrust laws including the Cartwright Act and its updated penalties approved in **SB 763** (2025) where applicable, to entities such as pension funds, investment companies, and others with the ability to control a large share of California's agricultural industry.

Pauma Tribal Farms in Pauma Valley

3.2 Develop local first opportunity to purchase ordinances for priority producers and land stewards

a) Fund a coalition of local and regional organizations to develop culturally and regionally informed first opportunity to purchase ordinances for privately held land that is zoned for agriculture.

   i) Mandate the coalition develop its model ordinances through statewide outreach and engagement with California Native American Tribes, local governments, and priority producers and land stewards.
   ii) Ensure California Native American Tribes are prioritized for acquisition of their ancestral lands.

b) Incentivize the adoption of first opportunity to purchase ordinances by local governments and support increased capacity for managing these transactions fairly and equitably while centering community needs.

c) Ensure efficacy of these efforts by amending Civil Code 711 to ensure that the return of ancestral lands is a justified restraint.

3.3 Establish a California Producer Retirement Fund

a) Establish and fund a California Producer Retirement Fund to ensure producers and land stewards have a secure retirement option without depending on the sale of their land to the highest bidder.

Note: 3.3.b and 3.3.c have not been approved for inclusion in the final report and will be considered at the December 11 Task Force meeting.

b) To finance the Retirement Fund, consider the following sources (see additional ideas in Appendix F):

   i) The new fee on pension funds and investment companies (3.1.b).
   ii) The California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) for producers and land stewards providing public benefits.
   iii) The California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) for producers and land stewards providing community education.

c) Consider appropriate limitations on eligibility with the core goal of benefiting small-scale and priority producers and land stewards who receive most of their income from agricultural operations (see Appendix F for initial considerations).

d) Ensure eligibility for cooperatives governed by producers and land stewards who co-own and co-steward land.

3.4 Establish and fund a Land Market Monitoring Program

a) Establish and fund a Land Market Monitoring Program to monitor agricultural land market trends and manage a public database of agricultural lands at the parcel level. The database will build on existing mapping and data collection efforts, such as the **Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program**, to ensure public transparency and knowledge about landownership and serve as a tool to inform policy action for more equitable land arrangements.

Why a Land Market Monitoring Program (LMMP)?

Tracking market trends and changes in land use in a way that is accessible to the public is critical to effectively addressing rapid agricultural land loss, consolidation, and disparities in land access. The LMMP is informed by the European Land Observatory, a new program that began a two-year pilot phase in 2025. European farmer- and farmworker-led organizations view the Observatory as a potential path to support land access, inform public policy, and track trends between ownership and public subsidies. More information about this pilot is **available online**.

b) Task the Land Market Monitoring Program with the following:

i) Survey publicly and privately held agricultural land to establish a baseline of availability and ownership information.
ii) Collect and analyze data from tax assessors' offices.
iii) Share findings in publicly accessible and interactive ways in an annual report.
iv) Collaborate with existing research efforts on the agricultural land market, such as the **California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers' Trends in Agricultural Land and Lease Values Report**.
v) Leverage technology to advance its work.
vi) Report potentially anti-competitive land holdings and procurement practices to the U.S. Department of Justice and the California Department of Justice.
vii) Research and report on the social, environmental, cultural, and economic impacts of land consolidation on rural communities.

Redwood Roots Farm Cooperative in Arcata

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

Sunol AgPark in Sunol

To ensure the long-term viability of California's agricultural sector, the state's invaluable agricultural land must be managed for ecological, social, and cultural benefits. Effective management depends on fair access and secure tenure for priority producers and land stewards.

California's fertile soils and diverse agricultural ecologies are world-renowned. Yet the state's agricultural land base is under threat from urban and industrial development and the negative impacts of centuries of extractive agriculture.

California is losing agricultural land at an alarming rate. According to the Department of Conservation, California's farm and grazing lands decreased by more than 1.6 million acres between 1984 and 2018, averaging to about one square mile every five days.[91] Urban development accounts for approximately 75% of this loss.[92] If current trends continue, California will "pave over, fragment, or compromise 797,400 [additional] acres of agricultural land by 2040."[93]

The highest quality agricultural soil in the state, known as "Prime Farmland," has seen the largest decrease in acreage.[94] As California's invaluable soil is lost to urban or industrial development, agriculture is pushed onto more marginal soils that require greater fertilizer, water, and energy inputs to achieve similar results.

To ensure the long-term viability of California's agricultural sector, the state's invaluable agricultural land must be managed for ecological, social, and cultural benefits

To truly heal from the negative consequences of ecological mismanagement, conservation efforts must acknowledge this history and center efforts for diverse and equitable land stewardship in their conservation tools and strategies.

These trends threaten to worsen already damaged agricultural ecologies and watersheds that combine with broader patterns of climate change to pose new threats to California's agricultural land. Yet these threats are anchored in the state's history of colonial settler violence and extractive agricultural practices that have produced the forms of environmental degradation and climate instability that must now be addressed. To truly heal from the negative consequences of ecological mismanagement, conservation efforts must acknowledge this history and center efforts for diverse and equitable land stewardship in their conservation tools and strategies.

Centering equity is especially critical as California adopts changes to agriculture and water management that may shrink the state's agricultural land base. For example, groundwater sustainability plans for critically over-drafted basins managed by groundwater sustainability agencies, as required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, may require reductions in groundwater pumping, with resulting impacts on agricultural land and production. In the San Joaquin Valley, it is estimated that between 500,000 acres[95] and 1 million acres of agricultural land may be taken out of production to achieve groundwater sustainability goals.[96]

This loss of agricultural land restricts the available land base for priority producers and land stewards and makes viable agricultural land more expensive and harder to access. In this context, the State of California has made preserving agricultural land a core part of many of its broader conservation goals, including the 30×30 Initiative,[97] the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy,[98] achieving carbon neutrality by 2045,[99] and biodiversity protection.[100] California's Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets aim to conserve 12,000 acres of croplands and 33,000 acres of grasslands (often used for grazing) per year beginning in 2030, with additional targets beyond this time horizon.[101] Local governments must also play a critical role in preserving agricultural land and reducing barriers to running a viable agricultural operation in urban and rural areas alike.

Preserving California's viable agricultural lands and supporting regenerative agricultural practices are critical for the state's future, but the question of who can steward these lands is just as important.

These targets and strategies are important but will only be effective if they center equitable land access and stewardship. Preserving California's viable agricultural lands and supporting regenerative agricultural practices are critical for the state's future, but the question of who can steward these lands is just as important. The recommendations in this Section offer ways to improve existing conservation strategies and tools to support priority producers and land stewards in achieving long-term land tenure.

One method for preserving California's agricultural land, while also ensuring fair access and secure land tenure, is to steward these lands as a public resource with long-term public benefits. Approximately 4% of California's cropland is owned by local, state, federal, or another form of non-Tribal government, and roughly 50% of this land is fallowed.[102] This publicly held land—especially agriculturally viable parcels with secure, sufficient water—presents a significant land access opportunity for priority producers and land stewards.

In addition to utilizing existing publicly held land, increasing public landholdings can halt the crisis of affordability at the root by removing agricultural land from the speculative land market, thereby intervening in the appreciation of land values over time. While expending public resources through grants or down payment assistance can help people acquire land, it does not effectively address the unattainable cost of land or the dependence on selling the land to the highest bidder to comfortably retire. Increasing the amount of publicly held land is one approach to slowing down the cycle of private gain while simultaneously increasing accessibility for priority producers and land stewards.

Efforts to increase the amount of publicly held land should be accompanied by other strategies for ensuring producers and land stewards are able to affordably and efficiently gain secure tenure on those lands, make a stable and dignified living, and securely retire when the time is right.

The recommendations that follow present a diverse set of strategies to preserve publicly and privately held agricultural land while centering fair access and secure land tenure. These strategies should be part of a statewide plan that establishes a comprehensive, cohesive strategy for effective land preservation and stewardship.

Case Study: Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation's experiences with conservation tools and land return

In November 2024, Chairwoman Louise J. Miranda Ramirez of the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation (OCEN) provided opening remarks during a Task Force meeting about the history of OCEN and the challenges they face in acquiring land for ceremony, food sovereignty, and shelter, particularly as a non-federally recognized California Native American Tribe. The Chairwoman explained the financial and practical restrictions associated with easements, zoning regulations, and other standard approaches to conservation that interfere with the Tribe's plans and cultural practices on the land.

Chairwoman Ramirez has collaborated for many years with a land trust to secure 84 acres for her Tribe's use, and, in 2024, the land trust acquired the land. However, to assume ownership of the land and comply with the existing easement, the Tribe needed to bare unexpected costs, including legal fees, insurance, annual maintenance costs, a property stewardship plan, and other required assessments, totaling approximately $620,760. OCEN did not have the funding, and the land remained under the control of the land trust. As of 2025, the Tribe continues their work to acquire land where their cultural practices and land stewardship will not be restricted by easements, zoning, and misaligned conservation frameworks currently used in California.

In response to OCEN's experience and similar stories shared with the Task Force, Section 4.2 outlines a multi-pronged approach to strengthen existing conservation programs, allow flexibility in conservation easements to better serve priority producers and land stewards, involve land stewards in the co-creation of conservation goals, and improve cultural humility across all efforts.

Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation ancestral lands

4.1 Develop a statewide agricultural land preservation and stewardship plan

a) Develop a statewide plan that centers equitable land access in projects to preserve and manage California's agricultural land, especially Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance, in alignment with **Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets**. This plan should improve existing conservation goals and strategies and be focused on the following objectives:

   i) Preserving publicly and privately held agricultural land.
   ii) Securing land access opportunities for priority producers and land stewards.

b) Establish clear and consistent metrics, tracking, evaluation, and accountability structures to guide implementation and enable public oversight, such as through the Land Market Monitoring Program (3.4).

Project New Village in San Diego

4.2 Improve conservation programs and tools to enable equitable land access and stewardship

a) In new and existing conservation programs, fund the following activities and costs. Where needed, amend existing statutes to provide legislative authority for these activities.

   i) Acquisition of agricultural conservation easements and enhancements that facilitate equitable and affordable land access. Examples of easement enhancements include rights of first refusal, residential restrictions, options to purchase at agricultural value (OPAV), and resale price restrictions.
   ii) Costs of permitting, deferred maintenance, infrastructure, farmworker housing, and other expenses needed to bring a property into a ready state to support a viable agricultural operation, so that those costs are not deferred to receiving land stewards.
   iii) Transaction costs and legal and technical support for priority producers and land stewards to negotiate and close land transactions, leases, and conservation and agricultural easements with land trusts, public agencies, and private landholders.
   iv) Technical assistance to support the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices.
   v) Implementation of regenerative and Traditional Ecological Knowledge practices, as defined in the glossary (Appendix A), and water conservation practices.

b) In new and existing conservation programs, prioritize funding for applicants that

incorporate the above activities and costs into their proposals and meet the following criteria:

i) Have completed an eligible training program, as outlined in 4.2.e.
ii) Are community-based, as defined in existing state programs.
iii) Practice cultural humility, as guided by the training programs listed in 4.2.e and other programs, such as the **California Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs' Cultural Humility Training**.
iv) Have demonstrated experience in working with priority producers and land stewards.

c) Require agencies to update existing conservation easement and conservation program guidelines to allow for traditional Tribal uses, as defined in the glossary (Appendix A), and flexible agricultural uses. Updates should be guided by collaboration with California Native American Tribes and include the following:

i) Encourage cultural land stewardship through Traditional Ecological Knowledge-based management.
ii) Provide flexibility for priority producers and land stewards to respond to changing environmental and market conditions.
iii) Allow for building infrastructure that is necessary to maintain viability and for land stewards and farmworkers to live on the land, such as housing, irrigation, water storage, and post-harvest handling infrastructure.
iv) When entering into a conservation easement agreement with a California Native American Tribe, allow the Tribe to define public access and conservation plans and terms.
v) Direct the Department of Conservation to develop a list of lessons learned and best practices to support these updates.

d) Leverage the **Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Program** and **LandFlex Program** to transition large-acreage agricultural land to stewardship by California Native American Tribes or priority producers and land stewards growing crops with lower water use:

i) Facilitate Tribal stewardship.
ii) Reduce regional groundwater demand by supporting small- to medium-scale diversified operations with demonstrated water conservation benefits.
iii) Provide regional economic opportunities by keeping agricultural land in production as a working landscape.
iv) Prevent the fallowing of land that may become a source of dust and pest problems if unmanaged.
v) Provide funding directly to impacted communities for water, land, and community development projects so they are empowered to develop their own water conservation and land management plans.
vi) Enhance access to surface water for priority producers and land stewards as part of improving regional, sustainable groundwater management.

e) Fund the creation and delivery of training programs for land trusts, public agencies, appraisers, lenders, and technical assistance

providers. These programs should:

i) Teach how to develop conservation tools (e.g., agricultural/cultural easements, equitable leases) that benefit priority producers and land stewards.
ii) Promote cultural humility, especially in working with California Native American Tribes.
iii) Be co-developed and implemented with California Native American Tribes, priority producers and land stewards, and community-based organizations.
iv) Provide financial support for participation by land trusts and technical assistance providers.
v) Reference existing resources and toolkits, such as the **California Natural Resource Agency's Tribal Stewardship Toolkit**.

f) Require land trusts and community-based organizations to co-create conservation goals in collaboration with the communities to which they are accountable, including consultation with California Native American Tribes.

g) Conduct a study to evaluate the effects of the Williamson Act on land equity and convene interested parties to consider future legislative reforms.

Note: 4.2.g.i and 4.2.g.ii have not been approved for inclusion in the final report and will be considered at the December 2025 meeting.

i) Evaluate implementation across counties and strengthen statewide guidance.
ii) Consider establishing state subventions (financial assistance from the state to local governments) for Williamson Act contracts that directly benefit priority producers and land stewards.

Housing for farmworkers is very important and related to the loss of agricultural land. Many vineyard owners are interested in conservation easements, but they are deterred by limits on how much land can be used for structures. More landowners would utilize conservation easements if they didn't limit their ability to build, renovate, or expand structures that are needed for their agricultural operations, including farmworker housing

Technical Assistance Provider, UCANR Interview Series

(full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

4.3 Promote local strategies for agricultural land preservation

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. As distance from the converted land increases, require that more land be preserved (see Appendix D for model language).

b) Incentivize and support local governments to adopt innovative land use planning strategies to limit development on agricultural land by:

   i) Establishing urban growth boundaries.
   ii) Implementing agriculture preservation overlays.

Task Force member Lawrence Harlen, SGC staff, and their site visit host at Project New Village in San Diego

4.4 Expand state and local government capacity to effectively and fairly lease publicly held land

a) Establish structures for effective and fair land access agreements on publicly held land by funding nonprofits, Resource Conservation Districts, land trusts, and other community-based organizations to serve as liaisons and facilitators between priority producers and land stewards and landholding agencies. Task funded organizations with the following:

   i) Serve as the legal entity holding the primary lease that is accountable for major land management and maintenance responsibilities.
   ii) Establish effective and fair sublease agreements for appropriately sized parcels that are tailored to the needs of priority producers and land stewards.
   iii) Facilitate effective negotiation between all parties and manage the intricacies of relationship management between priority producers and land stewards and the landholding agency to ensure mutual benefit and understanding of contracts and conservation-focused land management.

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.

   i) Ensure fair leasing terms based on the recommendations included in this report. Encourage and educate public landholders to adopt the new model template agreements when leasing lands.

ii) Examine existing public land leases and resolve or remove the administrative barriers that make leasing from public agencies inaccessible and prohibitive.

iii) Direct the coalition to establish standards for transparency of agencies' leasing processes and create clear, accessible information about leasing processes and timelines. Publicly accessible information should include details about appraisal processes and timelines, required documentation, due diligence, and the lease negotiation development and approval process.

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 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.

d) Incentivize and support local governments to make land that they already hold accessible to priority producers and land stewards by providing secure, long-term leases at low or no cost through partnerships with community-based organizations. Develop these incentives in consultation with local agencies and organizations.

e) Identify and track state-owned lands that are suitable for leasing to priority producers and land stewards. Make these lands available under balanced, long-term, and easy-to-navigate lease agreements (5.1).

Farm owner, Task Force members Qi Zhou and Nathaniel Brown, and SGC staff in a greenhouse in Gilroy

f) Once recommendations above are implemented, acquire Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide importance that is at risk of being sold for non-agricultural purposes or consolidated, preserve it through an agricultural conservation easement and enhancement designed to facilitate equitable and affordable land access (4.2.a.i), and lease or sell acquired land to priority producers and land stewards.

i) To identify viable parcels, reference and build upon the data compiled by the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and collaborate with the Land Market Monitoring Program, once established (3.4).

5. Prioritize and protect secure land tenure

Woody Ryno Farms in Arcata

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.

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.

Through engagement with priority producers and land stewards across California, the Task Force identified three key issues that negatively impact land tenure:

- Short-term, insecure, or otherwise unfavorable lease agreements for tenants.
- Burdensome policies and regulations.
- Zoning codes and permitting processes that undermine agricultural land use and stewardship.

As described by many respondents to the Land Access Experiences Survey (see the full report available on the **Task Force webpage**), there are many financial, ecological, and emotional costs of farming on leased land. Many priority producers and land stewards in California have unfavorable, year-to-year, or short-term leases, while others operate without a formal agreement. These tenuous arrangements reduce the incentive to invest in conservation practices or infrastructure improvements that require a longer-term commitment to incur benefits. In some cases, tenants are limited by untenable restrictions, such as prohibitions on infrastructure or hired employees that are imposed by landlords who may misunderstand the requirements of operating a farm. In addition, informal arrangements without leases or short-term lease agreements can disqualify producers from grant programs and other public resources.

In many lease agreements, the tenant is responsible for making improvements or repairing broken infrastructure or equipment, yet the value of these improvements accrues to the owner, making it even harder for tenants to build enough capital to acquire land. While short-term leases may be desirable in some instances—for example, some beginning producers and land stewards prefer a shorter-term commitment—they can limit opportunities for business development, land improvements, and wealth creation that are necessary for economic stability and future land acquisition.

Regulatory programs and policies are another major barrier to secure land tenure for priority producers and land stewards. While necessary to protect public health, conserve natural resources, and promote fairness, regulatory programs with a "one-size-fits-all" approach can result in unintended consequences and negative impacts for priority producers and land stewards, particularly those with less secure land tenure or limited resources.

Regulatory programs with a "one-size-fits-all" approach can result in unintended consequences and negative impacts for priority producers and land stewards, particularly those with less secure land tenure or limited resources.

Several policy areas, in particular, have the potential to perpetuate inequity if unintended consequences are not addressed, including the **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)**, the **Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)**, the **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)**, and local, regional, and state regulations for zoning, labor, and pesticide use.

The combined regulatory burden of multiple programs, each with its own set of fees, reporting, and compliance requirements, can cumulatively create barriers to entry into agriculture and limit viability for established producers and land stewards.[103]

In addition to state-level policies and regulations, local ordinances, code enforcement, and liens are often difficult for priority producers and land stewards to navigate and may hinder agricultural operations.

These concerns are especially relevant to zoning, water, and nuisance requirements, among others, that apply to agricultural operations in urban or peri-urban areas and on land repurposed from prior uses. For example, producers and land stewards noted local zoning restrictions that limit their ability to have on-site cold storage facilities and produce washing stations. These problems are exacerbated when agencies are siloed and issue contradictory guidance or regulations. Policies aimed at enhancing soil health through compost and cover crops, for example, can increase regulatory compliance burdens with the **Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program**.

Housing is also a key concern, as many producers and land stewards have difficulty living on or near the land they steward. Local zoning and permitting requirements can prevent the construction of adequate housing for producers, land stewards, and farmworkers. To address these challenges, flexibility in housing type is crucial while also ensuring safe and adequate housing and preventing agricultural land from being developed for residential use.

The recommendations that follow are intended to address these major barriers that play a critical role in determining whether priority producers and land stewards can maintain viable businesses and steward agricultural land for the long term.

> We urge involving county governments in crafting model ordinances and ensuring that local planning departments treat farm housing proposals with urgency and understanding, rather than skepticism. Clear statewide guidance is also important to help local officials embrace them and more farmers build housing on their land.
>
> Farmer Participants,
> UCANR Focus Group
>
> (full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

Case Study

Housing and infrastructure challenges in Santa Clara County

Two producers in Santa Clara County hosted the Task Force members on a site visit at their four-acre vegetable farm where they grow diverse Asian leafy greens to support Bay Area communities. The farmers explained how their current arrangement presents various challenges related to zoning restrictions, lack of quality and affordable housing, and the responsibility to invest in on-farm infrastructure and repairs without the guarantee of long-term tenure on the land.

For example, the landowner lives in the only allowable house on the farm due to zoning restrictions, requiring the tenant producers to rent a residence off-site. Additionally, the infrastructure on the property is decades old and prone to costly damage. In recent years high-wind events caused extensive damage to the greenhouses, and, a fire caused by old electrical wiring resulted in significant property damage. The tenants were responsible for cleaning up after the fire and repairing the infrastructure out of pocket.

If the landowner ends their lease, or if the producers achieve their goal of purchasing land, they will have no way to recoup these investments. Stronger protection mechanisms that allow tenant farmers to retain the value of improvements they make on leased land (5.1), as well as improved zoning regulations that allow for more on-farm housing (5.5), are vital for many farmers who shared similar stories with the Task Force

Leafy greens growing in a greenhouse.

5.1 Address power imbalances in landowner-tenant relationships

a) Pass legislation that adopts the Agricultural Tenants' Bill of Rights in Appendix B and mandate that the Tenants' Bill of Rights be respected in all agricultural leases, to ensure fair leasing terms and respect for tenants' rights, including decision-making powers.

b) Develop mechanisms that allow tenants to retain the monetary value associated with improvements made to leased land, including infrastructure improvements and ecological health.

c) Increase the maximum allowable length of leases in California from 51 to 100 years for priority producers and land stewards.

    i) Remove the automatic trigger of preliminary change of ownership for leases over 35 years to avoid property tax reassessment that can discourage landowners from longer leases.[104]

d) Create funding for and increase access to legal support, technical assistance, and mediation services for priority producers and land stewards at low or no cost, including contract and relationship development and negotiation services. This includes support for approaches that can address disputes and default without resorting to formal legal procedures, including but not limited to labor and land use disputes, pesticide drift, and lease terms.

Being on leased land with a year-to-year agreement has made it difficult to implement practices and grow crops that would be beneficial from an ecological and business perspective (i.e. orchards, hedgerows, perennials).

We invest in rented land and then leave it behind when the land is sold or the lease expires. I cannot take the energy, hours, financial investments nor land improvements with me. We have no security.

Land Access Experiences Survey Report

(full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

5.2 Expand the capacity of CDFA's Farmer Equity Office

a) Prioritize and provide additional, permanent funding to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Farmer Equity Office to increase staff capacity and promote interagency regulatory alignment for better outcomes for priority producers and land stewards in the following ways:

   i) Facilitate interagency review, coordination, and evaluation prior to implementing new regulations that impact priority producers and land stewards to avoid conflicting guidance and requirements. For instance, ensure that regulations, including the **Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program**, do not create undue burdens for producers and land stewards who participate in programs aimed at enhancing soil health through compost and cover crops (see 5.4).
   ii) Provide continued support for CDFA's **BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Advisory Committee**, CDFA's **Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee**, and any other pertinent public bodies tasked with evaluating the equitable development and implementation of agricultural policies.
      1. Ensure that these committees' feedback is provided to regulatory agencies and require that the regulatory agencies review and respond.
      2. Establish funding for the advisory members of the committees mentioned above (consider and disclose any potential impacts of **Government Code Section 1090**).
   iii) Define criteria for alternative or tiered reporting and compliance requirements related to regulatory programs for small-scale farms, diversified farms, and cultural cropping systems to address systemic inequities in "one size fits all" regulatory programs.
   iv) Implement the recommendations in the **CDFA and CalEPA Regulatory Alignment Study** that are relevant to equity for small-scale and limited-resource producers and land stewards, particularly the sections on Equity and Efficiency.[105]

b) Establish regional satellite offices as an extension of CDFA's Farmer Equity Office to conduct outreach and education about the Office and to serve as a liaison with Ag Ombuds (5.3) and other technical assistance providers.

5.3 Establish and fund regional Ag Ombuds positions

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.

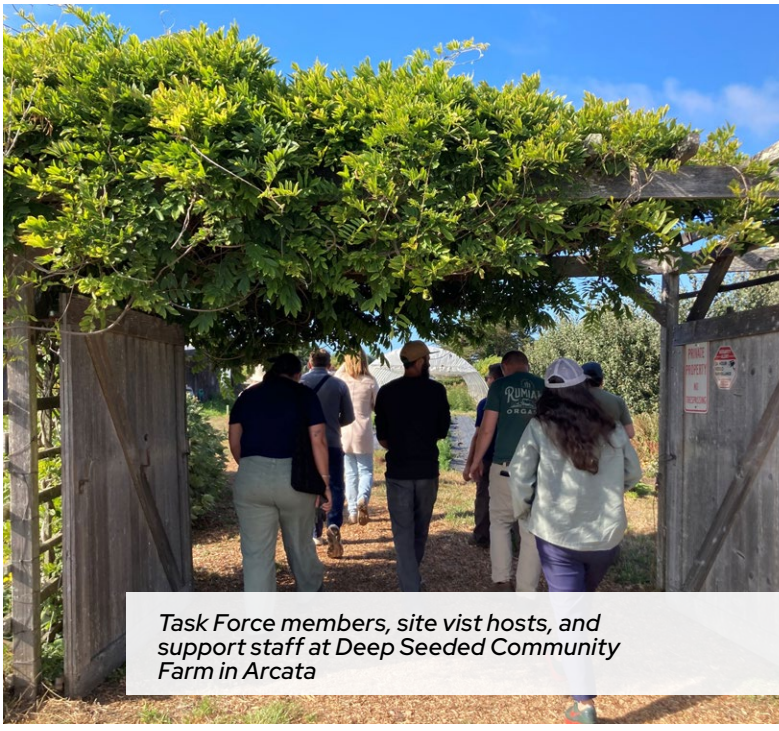
   i) Task newly established Ag Ombuds with serving as regional service providers for priority producers and land stewards to navigate permitting, regulatory processes, and public resources at all levels of government.
   ii) Ensure new positions are distributed equitably across the state based on regional resources and needs.

b) Establish a statewide Ag Ombuds coordinator position within a public, non-regulatory agency to document persistent challenges, work with regulatory agencies on solutions, and increase interagency communication for streamlined regulatory compliance (see also the **CDFA and CalEPA Regulatory Alignment Study** for a similar recommendation[106]).

   i) This position should serve as a liaison between the interagency coordination outlined in 5.2 and the Ag Ombuds positions working with priority producers and land stewards.

What is an Ag Ombuds?

According to Vince Trotter, Ag Ombuds for UCCE in Marin County, an ag ombuds is "a one-stop-shop for information on the many county, state and federal regulations that apply to commercial agriculture" who also, "when appropriate, help[s] producers to navigate the permitting or licensing process necessary to move their operation forward" Importantly, ag ombuds have no enforcement responsibilities, making them "a safe, neutral person to explore ideas with and help producers understand the laws in order to make their own decisions about their operation" (**"What is the Ag Ombudsman, anyway?"**).



Task Force members, site vist hosts, and support staff at Deep Seeded Community Farm in Arcata

5.4 Address inequitable policy consequences while respecting the intention of the law

a) Ensure representation of priority producers and land stewards in public decision-making bodies, including but not limited to existing commissions, water districts, irrigation districts, Resource Conservation Districts, groundwater sustainability agencies, local planning bodies, and county supervisors. Require these bodies to include tenants and priority producers and land stewards that do not own land in leadership positions and governance, including voting.

b) Require that all regulatory programs provide technical assistance to assist priority producers and land stewards with compliance.

   i) Coordinate with each program to establish one-time fee waiver options for those seeking technical assistance to achieve compliance.
   ii) Include assistance for cooperatives governed by producers and farmworkers who co-own and co-steward land given the unique complexity and lack of current support for these entities.

c) Amend and implement the following laws to enable secure land tenure, where applicable: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, Food Safety Modernization Act, labor policies and regulations, and pest management policies and regulations. See Appendix C for more detailed recommendations.

   i) **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)**
      1. Develop alternate requirements and structures for groundwater allocations, fees, monitoring, reporting, and other requirements to limit unintended impacts on priority producers and land stewards.
      2. Provide incentives, technical support, and guidance for groundwater sustainability agencies and other entities to include priority producers and land stewards in well mitigation programs to replace shallow wells that go dry during SGMA implementation.
      3. Implement appropriate recommendations for protecting small-scale agricultural operations outlined in the California Water Commission's white paper, **"A State Role in Supporting Groundwater Trading with Safeguards for Vulnerable Users,"** in support of Action 2.6 of Governor Newsom's Water Resilience Portfolio.[107] Include tenant producers and land stewards as those needing protection from market power and the sale of agricultural land for its associated groundwater allocations. Develop specific guidance, resources, and oversight to address the risks to small- and medium-sized agricultural operators outlined in the white paper. Implement the next steps for state engagement recommended in the white paper to protect vulnerable groundwater users, as appropriate. Consider enforcement of applicable state and federal antitrust and competition laws to limit the development of market power and collusion in groundwater trading.

   ii) **Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)**
      1. Implement the alternate reporting requirements included in the **Eastern**

San Joaquin General Order for small-scale, diversified agricultural operations that participate in water quality coalitions.

2. Develop tiered structures for regulatory fees and fines to better match the scale of operations for priority producers and land stewards.
3. Require water quality coalitions engage in outreach with priority producers and land stewards. Provide them with resources to support this work.
4. Mandate and provide resources to water quality coalitions to provide technical assistance and tools to assist priority producers and land stewards with compliance.
5. Identify a stable source of funding for irrigated lands technical assistance beyond member fees.

iii) **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)**

1. Establish an equitable process to schedule on-site inspections that is accessible to priority producers and land stewards with language barriers or limited access to digital communication methods.
2. Identify additional "rarely consumed raw" specialty crops from diverse priority producer and land steward communities at the state level for exemption from FSMA inspections.
3. Support the development of culturally appropriate and interactive curriculum meeting Produce Safety Alliance training requirements for FSMA compliance.

One size does not fit all in regulations. Regulators and policymakers must recognize that Asian vegetable growers have different practices and crops. We want standards (for example in food safety and pest management) that account for diverse farming traditions and crop types, rather than blanket rules that may not be appropriate.

Farmer Participants,
UCANR Focus Group

(full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

iv) California labor policies and regulations
   1. Expand and promote free **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** consultation services to support priority producers and land stewards.
   2. Revise OSHA fee structures and enforcement procedures, such as adopting a tiered approach, without reducing fundamental worker protections.
   3. Make equipment and infrastructure required for compliance available through agricultural equipment lending and sharing programs.

v) Pest management policies and regulations
   1. Support research, technical assistance, and training on agroecological pesticide alternatives appropriately scaled for small or diversified agricultural operations.
   2. Provide training and technical assistance in diverse languages and in culturally appropriate ways to priority producers and land stewards, so that, as private applicators, they can understand and follow pesticide safety regulations. Include curricula and study materials in diverse languages.
   3. Establish an adapted, more appropriate approach to private applicator certification for agroecological pesticide alternatives, such as products approved by the **National Organic Program (NOP)** and **Organic Review Material Institute (OMRI)**, using the **University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE)** trainings as a model.

5.5 Incentivize and support local governments to adopt zoning and land use planning practices that facilitate secure land tenure and stewardship

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). Provide resources to local governments, including the following:

   i) Funding for the development and implementation of local ordinances that achieve the actions listed in 5.5.b.
   ii) Training for Planning and Zoning Commissions on zoning changes to support regenerative agriculture, water conservation and efficiency strategies, local food access, and equitable land access.

b) Incentivize and support revisions to zoning codes and local regulations to facilitate the continued viability of small-scale, diversified agricultural operations through the following:

   i) Allow for agriculture-related activities, such as retail, infrastructure, like cold storage and processing facilities, and housing for priority producers and land stewards in areas currently zoned exclusively for agriculture.
   ii) Establish an "agricultural track" in building codes and infrastructure upgrades appropriate for small-scale farms, diversified farms, and cultural cropping systems to address systemic inequities in "one size fits all" zoning regulations,

including but not limited to housing, infrastructure, wells, and septic systems.

iii) Reduce penalties and develop pathways for priority producers and land stewards to bring existing unpermitted or out-of-code structures into compliance without excessive fees, so long as the intent of the law and health and safety standards are met.

iv) Streamline permitting processes and decrease costs related to housing construction for agricultural workers while ensuring humane living conditions.

v) Develop zoning policies that allow for various types of on-farm housing for farmworkers and owners, such as traditional Tribal housing, mobile homes, trailers, modular homes, double-wide homes, tiny homes, RVs, and campers.

vi) Remove barriers to infill housing projects to ease development pressure on peri-urban and rural land.

vii) While increasing housing on and near agricultural land, maintain protections:
   1. Establish a maximum ratio of housing-to-agriculture use to allow flexibility without undermining agricultural land preservation goals.
   2. Require local governments maintain ongoing inspections and enforce fair leasing practices to protect tenants, particularly in employer-operated housing.

viii) Provide guidance on local implementation of the Williamson Act to ensure that housing for producers, land stewards, and farmworkers, including temporary housing, is permitted.

Temalpakh Farm in Coachella


BOY SCOUT TROOP 8000
FRESNO ROTARY FOUNDATION
JO FOOD
ARCHERHOUND ADVERTISING
FRESNO STREET EATS

6. Support urban agriculture

Yo'Ville Community Garden and Farm in Fresno

California's cities and suburbs present unique challenges and opportunities for advancing agricultural land equity. Leveraging urban spaces for agriculture offers opportunities for priority producers and land stewards to cultivate land near the markets and communities they serve. These opportunities benefit all Californians by expanding access to nutritious foods, fostering community engagement, offering workforce development opportunities, educating communities about food and farming, and expanding green spaces.[108]

These opportunities benefit all Californians by expanding access to nutritious foods, fostering community engagement, offering workforce development opportunities, educating communities about food and farming, and expanding green spaces.

Despite the many benefits of urban agriculture, many barriers to successful and sustained urban agriculture projects persist. In a focus group with urban growers, participants shared that many local government staff lack awareness of urban agriculture and misunderstand what it takes to run a successful operation. This disconnect creates major barriers to building supportive systems and often results in urban agriculture being overlooked during updates to local codes and plans.

The key barriers to urban agriculture addressed in this Section include:

- The exclusion of urban agriculture from most existing grant, loan, and incentive programs.
- Excessive costs associated with urban water rates and installing water meters.
- Zoning restrictions that limit urban producers and land stewards' ability to establish profitable agricultural businesses.

In recent years, the state has initiated new funding opportunities for urban agriculture.[3] In 2023, the California Department of Food and Agriculture awarded $11,670,000 in proposals through the one-time only, competitive California Urban Agriculture Grant Program. Yet this was only a fraction of the "more than $68 million [that] was requested during the application period, highlighting the interest and need for urban agriculture across California."[109] In 2024, California voters approved Proposition 4, also known as the Climate Bond, which makes available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, $20 million for "urban agriculture projects that create or expand city or suburban community farms or gardens."[110]

In addition to providing financial support, other actions are needed to ensure equitable land access and secure tenure in California's urban spaces. The recommendations that follow outline strategies to enable and support urban agriculture to ensure equitable access to land in California for producing food, fiber, medicine, and other cultural resources.

3. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) defines urban agriculture as the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban settings, including things like inground small plot cultivation, raised beds, vertical production, warehouse farms, mushroom growing, urban forestry and tree care, community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and other innovations. CDFA defines "urban" as a geographic area no more than 25 miles adjacent to or outside of one Urbanized Area containing a population of 50,000 or more people (California Department of Food and Agriculture).

6.1 Ensure eligibility of urban producers and land stewards in existing programs and provide tailored funding

a) Formalize the recognition of urban producers and land stewards of all sizes by farm and agriculture agencies.

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.

c) In new and existing programs, fund the following activities and costs:

   i) Research, education, and policy change to reduce water costs for urban producers and land stewards through alternative arrangements, including agricultural, irrigation, or landscaping rates.
   ii) Installation of water meters at urban agriculture sites that commit to using water conservation equipment and other regenerative agriculture practices.
   iii) Projects to document and advance the role of urban agriculture in educational opportunities, workforce development, and access to green space.

d) Revise eligibility criteria in existing state and local grant programs, where required, to:

   i) Ensure urban agriculture projects are not excluded based on scale or acreage.
   ii) Recognize the co-benefits of urban agriculture beyond yield and acres of land, including ecosystem benefits, nutrition education, community wellness, and cultural benefits.
   iii) Award projects in urban agriculture incentive zones additional points in state and local grants.

e) Explore adding set-asides for urban agricultural producers to existing and new agricultural grant programs.

> Yet this was only a fraction of the "more than $68 million [that] was requested during the application period, highlighting the interest and need for urban agriculture across California."

We Grow Farms in Sacramento

6.2 Make land available for urban agriculture and address barriers to secure tenure

a) Incentivize local governments to adopt and implement urban agriculture incentive zones (**California Government Code 51040-51042**) statewide.

> "When you don't have a champion in local government to advocate for including agricultural space in parks, new developments, or other city properties, it's very hard to get access and increase urban production."
>
> Urban Grower Participant, UCANR Focus Group
>
> (full report available on the **Task Force webpage**)

b) Amend the Surplus Land Act to require that parcels deemed inappropriate for housing be considered for urban agriculture uses, particularly in urban agriculture zones, before they are offered for public sale or sale for non-public benefit uses.

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.

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.

    i) Require that this report be regularly updated and offer zoning codes, assessments, and general plan amendments as models for other jurisdictions.
    ii) To assist with implementation, fund technical assistance for local governments to update and improve policies to support urban agriculture.

e) Remove legal and zoning barriers to compost production at scales that support urban agriculture. Provide for a minimum area of allowable land that can be used for composting.

Next steps: Implementation and evaluation

A river landscape on the way to the Susanville Indian Rancheria

Implementation

The context, stories, and recommendations in this report lay the groundwork for future action. In many cases, the fastest and most effective way to enact these recommendations is through legislation. As such laws are developed, the Legislature should clearly state that supporting the stewardship of agricultural land by priority producers and land stewards, as defined in this report, is a core legislative intent.

The context, stories, and recommendations in this report lay the groundwork for future action.

While the Governor and Legislature are the principal audiences for this report, these recommendations can and should be advocated for, adopted, and implemented by local governments, community-based organizations, California Native American Tribes, private landowners, agricultural industry groups, technical assistance providers, researchers, and others. These communities can use this report as a guide and starting place to advance agricultural land equity.

For the State of California, the first step in advancing agricultural land equity is to acknowledge the historical violence and continued disparities on which the agricultural industry and the state itself were founded. The next step is to establish clear and concrete pathways to develop and implement these recommendations and to develop accountability mechanisms with California Native American Tribes, priority producers and land stewards, and community-based organizations. Active and consistent consultation and collaboration are critical to ensure all planning and implementation reflects the rich diversity of California's producers and land stewards.

Meaningful consultation and collaboration to advance these recommendations will require capacity building and training for state and local agency staff, specifically related to cultural humility and outreach to priority producers and land stewards. This community-led approach will require flexible processes and timelines as well as a willingness among state and local governments to learn and adapt. Community engagement protocols and partnership should be developed in collaboration with California Native American Tribes, priority producers and land stewards, and community-based organizations that are led by and serve these communities.

It is important to recognize that the areas of law relevant to equity work are dynamic and subject to ongoing change. This report does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as a substitute for consultation with legal counsel. Independent legal guidance is necessary to ensure that all applicable federal, state, and administrative laws are appropriately considered in decision-making.

The next step is to establish clear and concrete pathways to develop and implement these recommendations and to develop accountability mechanisms with California Native American Tribes, priority producers and land stewards, and community-based organizations.

Evaluation

Establishing a strong framework to track the implementation and outcomes of these recommendations is essential to ensuring accountability and long-term impact. The framework should include goals, metrics, and other approaches to meaningfully measure progress on the wide range of strategies and recommendations in this report. Many recommendations (including but not limited to 1.2.b, 2.6.d, and 4.1.b) offer a starting place for tracking outcomes. To ensure accountability and efficacy, a timeline for implementation should be developed that structures and monitors shorter- and longer-term actions.

Due to time and capacity constraints, the Task Force was unable to fully develop some relevant concepts. These ideas—outlined in Appendix F—warrant further research and consideration as efforts to advance agricultural land equity continue.

Establishing a strong framework to track the implementation and outcomes of these recommendations is essential to ensuring accountability and long-term impact.

Woody Ryno Farms in Arcata

References

[1] 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/

[2] Ackoff, Sophie, Evan Flom, Vanessa García Polanco, David Howard, Jessica Manly, Caroline Mueller, Holly Rippon-Butler, and Lytisha Wyatt. (2022). "Building a future with farmers 2022: Results and recommendations from the National Young Farmer Survey." National Young Farmers Coalition. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://youngfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/National-Survey-Web-Update_11.15.22-1.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/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/California/cav1.pdf

[4] Olmstead, Alan L. and Paul W. Rhode. (2017). "A history of California agriculture." University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://s.giannini.ucop.edu/uploads/giannini_public/19/41/194166a6-cfde-4013-ae55-3e8df86d44d0/a_history_of_california_agriculture.pdf; Pisani, Donald J. (1991). "Land monopoly in nineteenth-century California." *Agricultural History 65*(4), pp. 15–37. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.jstor.org/stable/3743944

[5] Castillo, Elias. (2015). *A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions*. Craven Street Books; Johnston-Dodds, Kimberly and Sarah Supahan. (2022). "Involuntary servitude, apprenticeship, and slavery of Native Americans in California." The California Indian History Website. Last accessed Oct. 23, 2025 from http://calindianhistory.org/; Madley, Benjamin. (2016). *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873*. Yale University Press; Pfaelzer, Jean. (2023). *California, a Slave State*. Yale University Press

[6] State of California Native American Heritage Commission. (n.d.). "Short overview of California Indian history." Last accessed Oct. 22, 2025 from https://nahc.ca.gov/native-americans/california-indian-history/

[7] Ibid.

[8] Johnston-Dodds, Kimberly. (2002). "Early California laws and policies related to California Indians." California Research Bureau. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://courts.ca.gov/publication/california-research-bureau-early-california-laws-and-policies-related-california

[9] Rovner, Melissa. (2022). "How Indigenous labor was diverted in the making of L.A. Aqueduct and Owens Valley. PBS SoCal. Last accessed Oct. 28, 2025 from https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/lost-la/paiute-la-aqueduct-owens-valley

[10] Newsom, Gavin. (2019). "Executive Order N-15-19." Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.18.19-Executive-Order.pdf

[11] California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2023). "Final report." p. 106. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf

[12] California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2023). "Final report." Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025, from https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf

[13] Raya, Marisa. (n.d.). "How do Californians define equitable agricultural land access and reparative solutions? Analyzing statewide public input from the California Reparations Task Force." p. 1.

[14] Dean, Terrance. (2021). "Expert witness testimony to the California Reparations Task Force meeting – October 2021." Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121/meetings/102021; Eissinger, Michael. (2013). "Where water flows communities grow: Water and rural California African American settlements." Last accessed Oct. 27, 2025 from https://www.academia.edu/4829085/Where_Water_Flows_Communities_Grow_Water_and_Rural_California_African_American_Settlements

[15] Ferguson, Rafter. (2021). "Losing ground: Farmland consolidation and threats to new and Black farmers and the future of farming." Union of Concerned Scientists. Last accessed Oct. 22, 2025 from https://www.ucs.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/losing-ground-white-paper-4-14-21.pdf

[16] Farrell, Justin, Paul Berne Burow, Kathryn McConnell, Jude Bayham, Kyle Whyte, and Gal Koss. (2021). "Effects of land dispossession and forced migration on Indigenous peoples in North America." *Science 374*(6567). http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.abe4943; Reznickova, Alice. (2023). "Lost inheritance: Black farmers face an uncertain future without heirs' property reforms." Union of Concerned Scientists. http://dx.doi.org/10.47923/2023.15127

[17] Fuller, Vernon. (1940). "The supply of agricultural labor as a factor in the evolution of farm organization in California." 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

[18] "Land Loss in Trying Times." (n.d.). Library of Congress. Last accessed Nov. 24 from https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/mexican/land-loss-in-trying-times/

[19] Minkoff-Zern, Laura-Anne, Nancy Peluso, Jennifer Sowerwine, and Christy Getz. (2011). "Race and regulation: Asian immigrants in California agriculture." *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability.* http://dx.doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8922.001.0001

[20] "Incarceration of Japanese Americans - Rosie the Riveter WWII home front." (2024). National Park Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.nps.gov/rori/learn/historyculture/incarceration-of-japanese-americans.htm

[21] Mitchell, Don. (2010). "Battle/fields: Braceros, agribusiness, and the violent reproduction of the California agricultural landscape during World War II." *Journal of Historical Geography 36*(2), pp. 143–156. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2010.01.003

[22] Cruz, Adrian. (2010). "There Will be No 'One Big Union': The Struggle for Interracial Labor Unionism in California Agriculture, 1933 — 1939." *Cultural Dynamics 22*(10), pp. 29-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374010368307

[23] McWilliams, Carey. (2000). *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California.* Berkeley: University of California Press; Chan, Sucheng. (1989). *The Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910.* Berkeley: University of California Press

[24] Brown, Paul, Edward Flores, and Ana Padilla. (2022). "Farmworker health in California." University of California, Merced. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://clc.ucmerced.edu/sites/clc.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/fwhs_report_2.2.2383.pdf

[25] Ibid. p. 37.

[26] Horst, Megan, Nathan McClintock, Adrien Baysse-Lainé, Ségolène Darly, Flaminia Paddeu, Coline Perrin, Kristin Reynolds, and Christophe-Toussaint Soulard. (2021). "Translating land justice through comparison: A US–French dialogue and research agenda." *Agriculture and Human Values 38*(4), pp. 865–880. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10460-021-10202-4

[27] 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/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/California/cav1.pdf

[28] Ornelas, Izaac, Wenson Fung, Susan Gabbard, and Daneil Carroll. (2022). "California findings from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) 2015-2019: A demographic and employment profile of California farmworkers." U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Policy Development and Research. p. i. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/naws/pdfs/NAWS%20Research%20Report%2015.pdf

[29] "Indigenous Mexicans in California agriculture." (2025). Indigenous Farmworkers. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from http://www.indigenousfarmworkers.org/

[30] Joseph, Caitlin, Gabrielle Roesch-McNally, and Ariel Looser. (2024). "The state of gender equity in U.S. agriculture." p. 17. American Farmland Trust. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://farmlandinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/12/AFT-gender-equity-report.pdf

[31] Ibid.

[32] 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/

[33] 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

[34] Ibid.

[35] Restore the Delta. (2023). "Analysis: California water rights still 90% white." Last accessed Oct. 3, 2025 from https://restorethedelta.org/2023/02/27/analysis-california-water-rights-still-90-white/

[36] Kate, Poole. (2022). "Water rights, and wrongs, in California." Natural Resources Defense Council. Last accessed Oct. 3, 2025 from https://www.nrdc.org/bio/kate-poole/water-rights-and-wrongs-california

[37] Holt-Giménez, Eric. (2017). "Agrarian questions and the struggle for land justice in the United States." *Land Justice: Re-imagining Land, Food, and the Commons in the United States.* Food First Books/Institute for Food and Development Policy. pp. 1-14. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://archive.foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/HoltGimenezIntro.pdf; Fairbairn, Madeliene. (2020). *Fields of Gold: Financing the Global Land Rush.* Cornell University Press.

[38] Rempel, Jenny Linder, Ella Belfer, Isha Ray, and Rachel Morello-Frosch. (2024). "Access for sale? Overlying rights, land transactions, and groundwater in California." Environmental Research Letters. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ad0f71/pdf

[39] "2025 trends report." (2025). California Chapter, ASFMRA. Last accessed Oct. 3, 2025 from https://calasfmra.com/ag-land-trends/

[40] "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

[41] Ibid.

[42] Vang Rasmussen, Laura, et al. (2024). "Joint environmental and social benefits from diversified agriculture." *Science 384*(6691), pp. 87-93. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adj1914

[43] "State economic blueprint." (2025). California Jobs First. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://jobsfirst.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Economic-Blueprint.pdf

[44] "The role of local and regional food systems in U.S. farm policy." (2016). Congressional Research Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R44390/R44390.4.pdf; Wiler, Anelyse M., Chris Hergesheimer, Ben Brisbois, Hannah Wittman, Annalee Yassi, and Jerry M. Speigel. (2015). "Food sovereignty, food security and health equity: a meta-narrative mapping exercise." *Health Policy and Planning, 30*(8), pp. 1079-1092. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czu109

[45] "Natural and working lands climate smart strategy." (2022). Nature-Based Climate Solutions. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/CNRA-Report-2022---Final_Accessible.pdf

[46] 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

[47] Conserving 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030." (2025). 30×30 California. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.californianature.ca.gov/; https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/Californias-NBS-Climate-Targets-2024.pdf; "California climate adaptation strategy 2024." (2021). State of California. Last accessed Oct. 14, 2025 from https://climateresilience.ca.gov/; "AB 32 climate change scoping plan." (2022). California Air Resources Board. Last accessed Oct. 14, 2025 from https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-

work/programs/ab-32-climate-change-scoping-plan

[48] Middleton-Manning, Beth Rose. (2011). *Trust in the Land: New Directions in Tribal Conservation.* The University of Arizona Press.

[49] Fairbairn, Madeleine. (2020). *Fields of Gold: Financing the Global Land Rush.* Cornell University Press; Song, Meredith and Adam Calo. (2025). "Who controls California farmland? The hard-to-find answer is disturbing." San Francisco Chronicle. Last accessed Oct. 27, 2025 from https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/farms-agriculture-corporations-21015386.php

[50] Ricciardi, Vincent, Zia Mehrabi, Hannah Wittman, Dana James, and Navin Ramankutty. (2021). "Higher yields and more biodiversity on smaller farms." *Nature Sustainability, 4*(7), pp. 651-657. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00699-2; Office of Public Affairs. (2017). "Farms + data: California's farms are smaller than the US average, but they're big on diversity – and productivity." California Department of Food and Agriculture Planting Seeds Blog. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://plantingseedsblog.cdfa.ca.gov/wordpress/?p=10952; Esquivel, Kenzo Emiliano, Liz Carlisle, Alison Ke, Elissa M. Olimpi, Patrick Baur, Joanna Ory, Hannah Waterhouse, Alastair Iles, Daniel S. Karp, Claire Kremen, and Timothy M. Bowles. (2021). "The 'sweet spot' in the middle: Why do mid-scale farms adopt diversification practices at higher rates?" *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems 5.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.734088; Vang Rasmussen, Laura, et al. (2024). "Joint environmental and social benefits from diversified agriculture." *Science 384*(6691), pp. 87-93. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adj1914

[51] Castillo, Elias. (2015.) *A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions.* Craven Street Books; Johnston-Dodds, Kimberly and Sarah Supahan. (2022). "Involuntary servitude, apprenticeship, and slavery of Native Americans in California." California Indian History. Last accessed Oct. 23, 2025 from http://calindianhistory.org/; Madley, Benjamin. (2016). *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873.* Yale University Press; Pfaelzer, Jean. (2023). *California, a Slave State.* Yale University Press.

[52] Shanahan, Jr., Donald G. (1975). "Compensation for the loss of aboriginal lands of California Indians." *Southern California Quarterly 57*(3), p. 298. https://doi.org/10.2307/41170608

[53] Ibid. pp. 302-303

[54] Ibid. pp. 303-305, 315; Heizer, Robert F. (1972). "The eighteen unratified treaties of 1851-1852 between the California Indians and the United States government." Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://nahc.ca.gov/webmaster/atlas/treaties/transcript.pdf

[55] Johnston-Dodds, Kimberly. (2002). "Early California laws and policies related to California Indians." California Research Bureau. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-08/ib.pdf

[56] Madley, Benjamin. (2016). "Understanding genocide in California under United States rule, 1846-1873." *Western Historical Quarterly 47*(4), pp. 449-461. Last accessed Oct. 27, 2025 from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26782724

[57] Gunther, Vanessa Ann. (2006). *Ambiguous Justice: Native Americans and the Law in Southern California, 1848-1890.* pp. 38, 52. Michigan State University Press.

[58] Ibid. pp. 93-95

[59] Ibid. p. 38

[60] Mathes, Valerie Sherer and Phil Brigandi. (2018). *Reservations, Removal and Reform: The Mission Indian Agents of Southern California: 1878-1903*; Gunther, Vanessa Ann. (2006). *Ambiguous Justice: Native Americans and the Law in Southern California, 1848-1890.* pp. 38, 52. Michigan State University Press.

[61] Sutton, Imre. (1967). "Private property in land among reservation Indians in Southern California." *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers 29.* Last accessed Oct. 27, 2025 from http://www.jstor.org/stable/24042325; Huntsinger, Lynn and Lucy Diekmann. (2010). "The virtual reservation: Land distribution, natural resource access, and equity on the Yurok Forest." *Natural Resources Journal 50*(2). Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol50/iss2/5

[62] Nakamura, Gary and Richard R. Harris. (1997). "Natural resource inventories of public domain trust allotments in California." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal 21*(3). https://doi.org/10.17953; "Public domain allotments." (2024). University of California, Davis. Last accessed Dec. 5, 2025 from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7s2507jn

[63] Miller, Larisa K. (2014). "Counting context: C.E. Kelsey's 1906 census of nonreservation Indians in Northern California." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal 38*(2). https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.38.2.l62h2r5280246383; The Advisory Council on California Indian Policy. (1997). "The ACCIP termination report: The continuing destructive effects of the termination policy on California Indians." California Truth & Healing Council. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://catruthandhealing.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/accip-termination-report.pdf

[64] Ibid.

[65] Whiteley, Kathleen. (2020). *The Indians of California versus The United States of America: California Dreaming in the Land of Lost Treaties, 1900-1975.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan]. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/163245/katcw_1.pdf?sequence=1; Daly, Heather Ponchetti. (2009). "Fractured relations at home: The 1953 Termination Act's effects on Tribal relationship throughout Southern California Indian country." *The American Indian Quarterly 33*(4), pp. 427-439. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2009.a362023

[66] Sowerwine, Jennifer, Megan Mucioki, Daniel Sarna-Wojcicki, and Lisa Hillman. (2019). "Reframing food security by and for Native American communities: A case study among Tribes in the Klamath River Basin of Oregon and California." *Food Security 11*, pp. 579-607. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-019-00925-y; Preston, William. (1997). "Serpent in the garden: Environmental change in colonial California." *California History 76*(2/3), pp. 268-277. https://doi.org/10.2307/25161669

[67] Sowerwine, Jennifer, Megan Mucioki, Daneil Sarna-Wojcicki, and Lisa Hillman. (2019). "Reframing food security by and for Native American communities: A case study among Tribes in the Klamath River Basin of Oregon and California." *Food Security 11*, pp. 579-607. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-019-00925-y

[68] Taylor, Alan H., Valeria Trouet, Carl N. Skinner, and Scott Stephens. (2016). "Socioecological transitions trigger fire regime shifts and modulate fire-climate interactions in the Sierra Nevada, USA, 1600-2015 CE." *PNAS 113*(48), pp. 13684-13689. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1609775113

[69] "Digital atlas of California Native Americans: A collection of map layers and links exploring California's Native American heritage and history." (n.d.). Native American Heritage Commission. Last accessed Oct. 28, 2025 from https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/88d47f08dc124f80a425534bbb761b72/

[70] Heizer, Robert F. (1972). "The eighteen unratified treaties of 1851-1852 between the California Indians and the United States Government." Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://nahc.ca.gov/webmaster/atlas/treaties/transcript.pdf

[71] "Tribal communities." (n.d.). California Census 2020. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://census.ca.gov/resource/tribal_gov/

[72] "Data." (n.d.). United States Census Bureau. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://data.census.gov/all

[73] Newsom, Gavin. (2020). "Statement of administration policy: Native American ancestral lands." Office of the Governor. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/9.25.20-Native-Ancestral-Lands-Policy.pdf

[74] "Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program (HFIL)." (n.d.). U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/fractionated-indian-land-loan-program-hfil

[75] 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

[76] Xie, Yanhua, Mitch Hunter, Ann Sorensen, Theresa Nogeire-McRae, Ryan Murphy, Justin P. Suraci, Stacy Lischka, and Tyler J. Lark. (2023). "U.S. farmland under threat of urbanization: Future development

scenarios to 2040." *Land 12*(3), p. 574. https://doi.org/10.3390/land12030574

[77] Newsom, Gavin. (2019). "Executive Order N-15-19." Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.18.19-Executive-Order.pdf

[78] California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2023). "Final report." p. 106. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf

[79] "Incarceration of Japanese Americans - Rosie the Riveter WWII home front." (2024). National Park Service. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.nps.gov/rori/learn/historyculture/incarceration-of-japanese-americans.htm

[80] Fuller, Vernon. (1940). "The supply of agricultural labor as a factor in the evolution of farm organization in California." US Congress. Committee on Education and Labor. Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor, hearings, 76th Congress, 3rd session, Exhibit 8762-A; Mitchell, Don. (2010). "Battle/fields: Braceros, agribusiness, and the violent reproduction of the California agricultural landscape during World War II." *Journal of Historical Geography 36*(2), pp. 143–156. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2010.01.003

[81] "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

[82] "Heirs' Property Relending Program." (n.d.). U.S. Department of Agriculture. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/heirs-property-eligibility/relending

[83] "CDFA spotlight: Aggie Bonds." (2005). Council of Development Finance Agencies. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.cdfa.net/cdfa/cdfaweb.nsf/0/3515cc91cab651c1882579360059f5e7; "Beginning farmer resources." (n.d.). Iowa Economic Development and Finance Authority. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://opportunityiowa.gov/business/small-business-entrepreneurs/beginning-farmers/resources; "Aggie Bond Beginning Farmer Loan Program." (n.d.). Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/aggie-bond-beginning-farmer-loan-program; "Beginning & Expanding Farmer Loan Program (Aggie Bond)." (n.d.). Business Oregon. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025, from https://www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/aggiebond/pages/default.aspx

[84] McGhee, Eric, Sarah Bohn, and Tess Thorman. (2018). "The 2020 Census and political representation in California." Public Policy Institute of California. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.ppic.org/publication/the-2020-census-and-political-representation-in-california/

[85] 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

[86] Song, Meredith and Adam Calo. (2025). "Who controls California farmland? The hard-to-find answer is disturbing." San Francisco Chronicle. Last accessed Oct. 24, 2025 from https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/farms-agriculture-corporations-21015386.php

[87] Union of Concerned Scientists. (2021). "Bigger farms, bigger problems." Last accessed Oct. 24, 2025 from https://www.ucs.org/resources/bigger-farms-bigger-problems

[88] Fernandez-Bou, Angel Santiago, et al. (2025). "Cropland repurposing as a tool for water sustainability and just land transition in California: Review and best practices." *Frontiers in Water 7*, pp. 1-31. https://doi.org/10.3389/frwa.2025.1510413

[89] Fairbairn, Madeleine. (2020). *Fields of Gold: Financing the Global Land Rush.* Cornell University Press. p. 2; Rempel, Jenny Linder, Ella Belfer, Isha Ray, and Rachel Morello-Frosch. (2024). "Access for sale? Overlying rights, land transactions, and groundwater in California." Environmental Research Letters. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ad0f71/pdf

[90] Song, Meredith and Adam Calo. (2025). "Who controls California farmland? The hard-to-find answer is disturbing." San Francisco Chronicle. Last accessed Oct. 24, 2025 from https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/farms-agriculture-corporations-21015386.php

[91] "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

[92] Ibid.

[93] 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/blog/2022-census-of-agriculture-california/

[94] "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

[95] Hanak, Ellen, Alvar Escriva-Bou, Brian Gray, Sarge Green, Thomas Harter, Jelena Jezdimirovic, Jay Lund, Josué Medellín-Azuara, Peter Moyle, and Nathaniel Seavy. (2019). "Water and the future of the San Joaquin Valley." Public Policy Institute of California. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.ppic.org/publication/water-and-the-future-of-the-san-joaquin-valley/

[96] 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-impact-analysis-phase-one-results/

[97] "Conserving 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030." (2025). 30×30 California. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.californianature.ca.gov/

[98] "Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy." (2022). Nature-Based Climate Solutions. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/CNRA-Report-2022---Final_Accessible.pdf

[99] Brown, Jr., Edmund G. (2018). "Executive Order B-55-18 to Achieve Carbon Neutrality." Executive Department: State of California. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://archive.gov.ca.gov/archive/gov39/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/9.10.18-Executive-Order.pdf; "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

[100] Newsom, Gavin. (2020). "Executive Order N-82-20." Office of the Governor. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/10.07.2020-EO-N-82-20-.pdf

[101] "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

[102] 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

[103] Hamilton, Lynn and Michael McCullough. (2025). "Two decades of change: Evolving costs of regulatory compliance in the produce industry." Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?params=/context/agb_fac/article/1164/&path_info=2024_Final_Report_Lettuce_Regulatory_Costs__FINAL.pdf

[104] Gruber, Jeremy. (2018). "35 years can be taxing on a landlord: The California property tax implications of leases of 35 years or longer." Cox Castle. Last accessed Nov. 3, 2025 from https://www.coxcastle.com/

publication-35-years-can-be-taxing-on-a-landlord-the-california-property-tax-implications-of-leases-of-35-years-or-longer

[105] "CDFA and CalEPA Regulatory Alignment Study." (n.d.). California Department of Food and Agriculture. Last accessed Nov. 21, 2025 from https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/RegulatoryAlignment/

[106] Ibid.

[107] "A state role in supporting groundwater trading with safeguards for vulnerable users: Findings and next steps." (2022). California Water Commission. Last accessed Oct. 28, 2025 from https://cwc.ca.gov/-/media/CWC-Website/Files/Documents/2022/Groundwater-Trading_White-Paper_Final.pdf

[108] "Urban Agriculture Grant Program." (n.d.). California Department of Food and Agriculture. Last accessed Oct. 24, 2025 from https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/farm_to_fork/grants/urban_ag.html

[109] "California Urban Agriculture Grant Program 2024 report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, 2021-22 budget package." (2024). California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork. p. 19. Last accessed Oct. 24, 2025 from https://cafarmtofork.cdfa.ca.gov/docs/2024_Urban_Ag_Legislative_Report.pdf

[110] SB 867 (2024) section 93540 (c). Last accessed Oct. 24, 2025 from https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB867

The Task Force was established to equitably increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional Tribal agricultural uses. As such, all recommendations included in this report are intended to serve and support priority producers and land stewards, which refers to those who have been historically and systematically excluded from landownership and secure tenure. Unless otherwise specified, all recommendations are directed to the Governor and Legislature of the State of California.