

Briefing Materials

Prepared for the California Agricultural
Land Equity Task Force Meeting

Oct. 15 & 16, 2025

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Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Staff Report

To California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Members, October 15 & 16, 2025

Announcements & Updates

California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) announces release of Draft Guidelines

SGC has released Draft Guidelines for two of its climate investment programs:

- [Transformative Climate Communities \(TCC\) – Round 6](#)
- [Community Resilience Centers \(CRC\) – Round 2](#)

These investment programs seek to fund community-led development and climate resilience projects. Both programs include priority points and funding goals for Tribal, unincorporated, and rural communities. For more information, [view the web announcement](#).

Both sets of Draft Guidelines are open for public comment from Sept. 29, 2025, through Jan. 2, 2026, at 5 p.m. [Submit public comment through this form](#). Please send questions to TCC@sgc.ca.gov or CRC@sgc.ca.gov.

Subcommittee and working group updates

At the August 2025 meeting, the Task Force established five new subcommittees. They met as follows:

- Goal 1 subcommittee: Sep. 16, 2025
- Goal 2 subcommittee: Sep. 2 and Sep. 19, 2025
- Goal 3 subcommittee: Sep. 4 and Sep. 17, 2025
- Goal 4 subcommittee: Sep. 5 and Sep. 23, 2025
- Restorative land subcommittee: Sep. 5 and Sep. 24, 2025

In addition, the Task Force established the following working groups that met between one and three times in September:

- Interagency review and coastal access working group
- Community input working group
- Urban agriculture working group
- Goal 1 working group (established by Goal 1 subcommittee)

Updated Task Force budget table

Non-labor expenditures are current as of September 30, 2025. Personnel costs are current as of June 2025 as labor costs are still being processed following the switch to the 2025–26 fiscal year on July 1.

Staff will lead a discussion about local assistance funds at the October meeting.

Category	FY 22–23, 23–24, & 24–25 expenditures	FY 25–26 expenditures thru 9/2025	Total obligated	Total budgeted	Total remaining
Personnel (SGC staff)	\$477,151	Processing	\$1,100,760	\$1,100,760	\$0
Operating expenses (travel, facilitator, language access, etc.)	\$365,473	\$2,924	\$290,579	\$884,240	\$225,264
Research and technical assistance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$270,000	\$270,000
Local assistance (e.g., grants, pilot projects, research)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Total	\$842,624	\$2,924	\$1,406,284	\$3,255,000	\$1,495,264

Legislative Updates

As indicated in the [California State Senate legislative calendar](#), September 12, 2025 was the last day for each house to pass bills and send them to the Governor for signature or veto. October 12 is the last day for the Governor to sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature.

The status of the bills below was recorded on October 7.

[AB 524 \(Wilson\)](#)

Would create Farmland Access and Conservation for Thriving Communities Program, administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC). DOC will provide financial assistance to qualified entities to acquire agricultural lands to transfer or provide long-term leases to qualified farmer participants. DOC may contract with nonprofits to administer program.

Status: Amended bill passed by the Senate on Sept. 10 (Ayes 77. Noes 0). Vetoed by Governor October 1, 2025.

[SB 462 \(Cortese\)](#)

Creates the Farmland Conservancy Program Funding Account within the California Farmland Conservancy Program Fund. Would require \$20 million be annually appropriated to the Account for agricultural conservation easements on agricultural land.

Status: This bill was not advanced out of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and remains held under submission.

[AB 1485 \(Macedo\)](#)

As amended, would exempt tribal land return transactions for cultural, educational, recreational, or conservation uses from the documentary transfer tax, and exempt land held by federally recognized tribes for conservation purposes from property tax until 2033.

Status: Passed in the Senate on September 11 (Ayes 40. Noes 0.) and ordered to the Assembly. Did not advance beyond the Assembly.

[AB 57 \(McKinnor\)](#)

Reserves 10% of funding for home loan assistance programs for descendants of formerly enslaved people.

Status: Passed in the Assembly on September 9 (Ayes 60. Noes 10.). Sent to the Governor September 16. Awaiting action.

[AB 62 \(McKinnor\)](#)

Creates claims process to assist victims of racially motivated eminent domain in seeking the return of the taken property, other property of equal value, or financial compensation.

Status: Passed in the Assembly on September 9 (Ayes 66. Noes 4.). Sent to the Governor September 16. Awaiting action.

[SB 437 \(Bradford\)](#)

Funds California State University research to further the recommendations in Reparations Report and build systems to verify decent and confirm eligibility for reparative claims.

Status: Passed in the Senate on September 9 (Ayes 29. Noes 10.). Sent to the Governor September 17. Awaiting action.

[SB 518 \(Weber-Pierson\)](#)

Establishes a Bureau for Descendants of American Slavery within Civil Rights Department to verify eligibility, develop/implement public education campaigns, and administer future programs.

Status: Passed in the Senate on September 10 (Ayes 30. Noes 10.). Sent to the Governor September 22. Awaiting action.

Summary of Revisions: Aug. – Oct. 2025

Prepared by SGC staff for the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

October 7, 2025

Subcommittees and working groups

In August 2025, the Task Force created subcommittees that would focus on the report goals and working groups that would address specific work tasks.

The resulting subcommittees were organized as follows:

- Goal 1, tribal stewardship and land return: Emily Burgueno and Lawrence Harlan
- Goal 2, preserved and thriving agricultural land: Nathaniel Brown, Dorian Payán, Thea Rittenhouse
- Goal 3, equitable land transition and acquisition: Irene de Barraicua, James Nakahara, Thea Rittenhouse, Doria Robinson, Qi Zhou
- Goal 4, secure land tenure: Irene de Barraicua, Ruth Dahlquist-Willard, James Nakahara, Liya Schwartzman
- Restorative land: Irene de Barraicua, Lawrence Harlan, Thea Rittenhouse, Doria Robinson
 - Note: This subcommittee drafted language that has been incorporated into the October 2025 Draft Report as Goal 2: Restorative land fund and education campaign. The Task Force will discuss this new language at the October meeting.

Working groups were assigned specific tasks, as identified below.

- The interagency review and coastal access working group (Emily Burgueno and Thea Rittenhouse) had two tasks: 1) Incorporating issues of Tribal coastal access and coastal/marine TEK into the recommendations (included in the October 2025 Draft Report) and 2) reviewing and incorporating interagency feedback. To facilitate review of the interagency feedback, SGC staff anonymized, consolidated, and synthesized feedback from state agencies and departments and shared feedback with the working group in two forms: 1) tracked changes with smaller proposed revisions focused on wording or structure, and 2) a list of questions and bigger proposed revisions for discussion. The working group made initial decisions about aligned revisions

and tracked remaining questions for discussion at subcommittee meetings or the October Task Force meeting. Task Force members are welcome to view a more detailed list of interagency comments upon request.

- The community engagement working group (Nelson Hawkins and James Nakahara) was tasked with reviewing and incorporating input from community engagement sessions and nine public comment letters submitted by a combination of California Native American Tribes and community organizations. To facilitate review of the community input, SGC staff anonymized, consolidated, and synthesized all feedback and shared it with the working group in two forms: 1) tracked changes with smaller proposed revisions focused on wording or structure, and 2) a list of discussion topics for review and deliberation by working group members. The working group made decisions to incorporate certain revisions into the October Draft Report and requested that the full Task Force discuss a number of others before incorporating. Task Force members are welcome to view a more detailed list of public input and comments upon request.
- The urban agriculture working group drafted recommendations about enabling and supporting urban agriculture for review and discussion at the October meeting. The Task Force will decide whether and how to move this proposed language into the November Draft.
- The Goal 1 Subcommittee established a working group to complete the discussions started during the Goal 1 subcommittee meeting.

Revisions process

The subcommittees met virtually in September to review revisions from the August meeting and continue refining ideas. The working groups met with SGC staff during the same period to advance their assigned tasks.

As these groups met, SGC staff made revisions as directed by subcommittees and working groups and noted areas that needed further review or discussion at subsequent meetings.

In preparation for the October Task Force meeting, staff consolidated the report sections, revised language to clarify ideas and reduce redundancy, and flagged language in the October 2025 Draft Report in one of two ways, as directed by the Task Force: 1) new content for review, or 2) proposed language that needs further discussion before being incorporated into the clean version of the draft report. These flags, along with remaining discussion questions that are noted in the draft

where relevant, will serve as the foundation for discussion at the October 2025 meeting.