

# California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Meeting Summary: Nov. 13, 2025

## Meeting Called to Order

Chair Nelson Hawkins called the meeting to order at 8:41 a.m. Facilitator Meagan Wylie welcomed attendees, provided housekeeping remarks, reviewed participation guidelines, and previewed the day's agenda.

## Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Nelson Hawkins, Chair
- Emily Burgueno, Vice Chair
- Irene de Barraicua\*
- Nathaniel Brown\*
- Ruth Dahlquist-Willard
- Darlene Franco
- James Nakahara
- Dorian Payán
- Liya Schwartzman\*
- Thea Rittenhouse\*
- Doria Robinson
- Qi Zhou

Members absent:

- Lawrence Harlan\* (present from 10:22 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.)

Quorum was established.

## Staff Attendance:

Staff members present:

- Sarah Bauer, California Strategic Growth Council (Legal Counsel)
- Camille Frazier, California Strategic Growth Council
- Sean Kennedy, California Strategic Growth Council
- Matt Read\*, California Strategic Growth Council (Legal Counsel)
- Tessa Salzman, California Strategic Growth Council
- Caleb Swanson, California Strategic Growth Council

- Meagan Wylie, California State University Sacramento

\* *Denotes virtual attendance*

## Welcoming Remarks

Corrina Gould, Founder of Sogorea Te' Land Trust, provided opening reflections. She emphasized the long history of Ohlone dispossession, noting that her people have been separated from their homelands for more than 200 years. She described how modern agriculture bears little resemblance to the Indigenous stewardship practices that sustained California ecosystems for millennia and how urban development has obscured sacred sites, waterways, and ecological functions, including along Strawberry Creek—adjacent to the meeting venue.

Gould shared the work of Sogorea Te' Land Trust, which centers on returning land to Indigenous stewardship, cultivating community gardens, supporting restoration projects, providing youth education, and revitalizing relationships with land, species, water, and language. She underscored that Land Back benefits all people and ecosystems, reminding attendees that human beings were the last to arrive in creation and carry a responsibility to care for the Earth.

Gould also stressed the importance of including non-federally recognized California Native American Tribes in land return efforts, asking, “unrecognized by whom?” and noting that Indigenous ancestors and communities have always known who their people are. In many cases, non-federally recognized Tribes maintain deep relationships with local landscapes and should not be excluded from opportunities for stewardship or return.

Task Force members expressed deep appreciation for Gould’s participation and opening reflections.

## Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of Oct. 15-16, 2025, Meeting Summary.

### Action:

Member Robinson moved to approve the meeting summary. Chair Hawkins seconded.

### Task Force Discussion:

Member Burgueno requested several clarifying edits (pp. 7–18), including:

- Expanded references to historic and ongoing dispossession.
- Inclusion of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in relevant sections.
- Modification to terminology relating to California Native American Tribes.

The motion was recalled to incorporate edits. Member Nakahara moved to approve the amended summary. Member Dahlquist-Willard seconded.

### Public Comment:

None.

**Action:**

Motion passed. (12-0-1\*). (\*One absent for vote.)

## Staff Report

Staff provided updates:

- The Tule River Indian Tribe reclaimed 17,300 acres in October.
- The Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) Climate Vulnerability Map was released.
- New written public comments were received and will continue to be posted.
- Staff has ongoing work to review remaining budget elements following the near conclusion of Task Force activities.

Vice Chair Burgueno described a new San Diego–based land stewardship training for California Native American Tribes that was developed through partnership with regional organizations and is receiving positive feedback.

SGC Legal Counsel reported on Conflict of Interest (COI) guidance:

- Written COI guidance is being finalized and will be shared soon.
- The Task Force’s discussion involving Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) dollars does not constitute a COI.
- More formal involvement in program design would be a COI.
- To avoid conflict, SGC will not convene further Task Force discussions on Reserved Funds.

Task Force membership will be formally concluded at the Feb. 25, 2026 SGC Council meeting. Subsequent public meetings will be open to former Task Force members as members of the public.

**Public Comment:**

None.

## Working Session

Members referenced the [November 2025 version](#) of the updated Draft Report. Staff provided an overview of the working session and its associated goals and then reviewed the Report development timeline. Like the October Task Force meeting, the purpose of the working session was to reach broad support on Report content and identify issues requiring further revision before the December meeting. Staff outlined potential pathways and options for moving forward subgoals or other content that did not enjoy support for inclusion by some or many Task Force members.

Staff summarized key revisions made since October, as outlined in the meeting's [Briefing Packet](#).

The November Draft Report was shared on screen for members to engage in detailed discussion on each section of the Report, including front matter, sections and associated recommendations, and appendices. Staff made in-line tracked changes edits to the Draft Report as discussion unfolded, and members expressed their level of support for the various sections.

Discussion highlights:

### **Executive Summary and Introductory Content:**

Discussion included:

- Clarification on the term *financialization*.
  - After discussion, members agreed to keep the concept and add a glossary definition.
- Agreement to update the following section titles for clarity:
  - Section 1: Prioritize Tribal Stewardship and Land Return
  - Section 3: Halt, and mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation
  - Section 5: Prioritize and protect secure land tenure
- Support for including climate change and regulatory misalignment as drivers of land consolidation.
- Members reiterated interest in including visualizations of land consolidation trends.
  - Staff described forthcoming visualizations showing an increase in large farms and decrease in small farms.
- Requested consistent capitalization of “Indigenous.”
- Requested inclusion of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in several sections.
- Outcome: Support.

### **Section 1: Tribal Stewardship and Land Return**

- Introductory Framing:
  - Integrated language requested in October. No other updates.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 1.1:
  - Revisions mirrored language added in Section 2 regarding the creation of a new fund and reflected prior Tribal Engagement session feedback.
  - Members discussed the reference to leveraging philanthropic investments. Some preferred to focus on state responsibility, while others noted philanthropy can expand opportunities where state funding is limited (e.g., land acquisition).
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 1.2:
  - Members flagged the need to address how new entities (e.g., proposed commissions) would be established.
  - Recommended a minor reordering of subsections to improve flow.

- Suggested updating terminology (e.g., replacing “practices” with “lifeways”)
- Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 1.3:
  - Outcome: Supported without discussion.
- Recommendation 1.4:
  - Outcome: Supported without discussion.

## **Section 2: Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and land stewards**

- Introductory Framing:
  - Members reinforced that harms must be named clearly and specifically.
  - Emphasis should be on California-specific historical experiences, such as slavery, the mission system, forced labor, discriminatory lending, etc.
  - A member requested including content acknowledging small-plot and backyard producers.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 2.1:
  - Members emphasized ensuring land acquired through the fund is not taken from California Native American Tribes and requested culturally appropriate outreach.
  - Clarifications were suggested regarding “initial deposits” and pathways to ownership.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 2.2:
  - Update recommendation title to: Develop and implement a public education campaign to document past and ongoing harm.
  - Members recommended indicating that harms are both historic and ongoing and ensuring education efforts are age-appropriate and California-specific.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 2.3:
  - Members discussed refining exemption criteria, strengthening prioritization language, and ensuring direct benefit to priority producers and land stewards.
  - Members debated whether to include Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) and nonprofits, recommending requirements such as having a proven track record of working to benefit priority producers and land stewards and submitting community letters of support—while also avoiding the exclusion of new entities.
  - Outcome: General support with some concerns noted. Vice Chair Burgueno does not support.
- Associated Case Study:
  - Outcome: Members support including the case study with additional emphasis on loan program design and eligibility challenges.
- Recommendation 2.4:
  - Add low-interest loan language.
  - Include both “landless” and “first-time buyers” in eligibility.

- Outcome: General support. Two “can live with.”
- Recommendation 2.5:
  - Members expressed concern about one financing mechanism and sought additional information.
    - Members agreed to move the contested component in subsection (f) to Appendix F while retaining remaining elements.
  - Outcome: General support for 2.5 without subsection (f).
- Recommendation 2.6:
  - Outcome: Support without discussion.
- Recommendation 2.7:
  - Members recommended clarifying the distinctions between direct technical assistance (TA) and regional coordination, reordering subsections, and refining terminology related to TA providers.
  - Outcome: Support.

### **Section 3: Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation**

- Introductory Framing:
  - Outcome: Support without discussion.
- Recommendation 3.1:
  - Members supported strengthened enforcement and accountability language.
  - Referencing Senate Bill (SB) 763 was discussed.
    - Members requested more time to review before approving.
    - A future study on antitrust implications for agriculture was suggested.
    - Antitrust-related language will be included in the December draft but flagged as pending.
  - Outcome: Support with subsections (c) and (e) flagged for December review.
- Recommendation 3.2:
  - Members noted overlap with Sections 2 and 4.
  - Recommended focusing Section 3 more clearly on conservation and stewardship outcomes.
    - Staff to reorganize goals accordingly.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 3.3:
  - Update name to: Establish a California Producer ~~Pension~~ Retirement Fund
  - Requested refinements for clarity and specificity, including combining related subsections and clarifying enforcement mechanisms.
  - Outcome: Support with subsection (b) flagged for December.
- Recommendation 3.4:
  - Include the California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (CALASFMRA) as an additional data source, noting both its usefulness and its limitations.
  - Add language encouraging the reporting of anti-competitive behavior.
  - Outcome: General support. Two “can live with.”

## Section 4: Preserve California’s agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship

- Introductory Framing:
  - *Outcome*: Supported without discussion.
- Recommendation 4.1:
  - Members emphasized the importance of explicitly recognizing non–federally recognized California Native American Tribes and ensuring alignment with similar language used elsewhere in the Report.
  - *Outcome*: Support.
- Recommendation 4.2:
  - Need for clearer enforcement and implementation considerations.
    - Unresolved enforcement concepts will be placed in Appendix F for future development.
  - Language refined to include land stewardship, Traditional Ecological Knowledge alignment, and glossary consistency.
  - One subsection removed (h) due to clarity, feasibility, and Tribal considerations.
  - Discussion on the Williamson Act resulted in interest in reframing as a study or moving to Appendix F.
  - Suggestion to reference California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Tribal Stewardship Toolkit.
  - *Outcome*: Support, with removal of (h) and (g.i) to be further clarified.
- Recommendation 4.3:
  - Suggested possible reorganization of subgoals to ensure clarity and alignment with related recommendations.
  - *Outcome*: Support.
- Recommendation 4.4:
  - Members considered the section's framing, particularly around increasing public landholdings. Some raised concerns about state effectiveness in managing land and the need to prioritize establishing secure, long-term leasing and stewardship pathways before expanding public land inventories.
  - Members discussed clarifying the intent:
    - Conserving prime agricultural lands.
    - Enabling access through long-term leasing or ownership transfer.
    - Acknowledging lands of cultural value.
  - Suggestions included reorganizing subsections, elevating certain concepts, and refining the title to better match the recommendation's purpose.
  - The group agreed to restructure the section to reflect both conservation goals and improved mechanisms for equitable access to public land.
  - *Outcome*: Mixed, with some “can live with” positions, pending refinement. Recommendation to be revised for consideration in advance of December.

## Section 5: Prioritize and protect secure land tenure

- Introductory Framing:
  - Outcome: Support without discussion.
- Recommendation 5.1:
  - Members discussed enforcement considerations and the need for clearer implementation mechanisms.
  - It was noted that similar enforcement details are addressed elsewhere in the Report, including in the implementation section. Legislation may ultimately be needed to operationalize a Tenant Bill of Rights.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 5.2:
  - Subgoal (c): staff noted earlier suggestions to rename CDFA’s Farmer Equity Office.
    - Members discussed whether the statutory framework allows for such a change. Questions were raised about terminology under the Farmer Equity Act and whether “farm equity” or “farmer equity” is more appropriate.
    - Some members expressed reservations. Others suggested placing the concept in Appendix F for future consideration.
  - Outcome: Majority support with moving item (c) to Appendix F. One “can live with.”
- Recommendation 5.3:
  - Add a reference to additional county-level examples.
  - Support for a regulatory alignment study.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 5.4:
  - Refine language, such as shifting “allow” to “require,” and clarify applicability to tenants, farmworkers, and individuals farming on community-based organization land.
  - Suggestion to add concepts related to electing power and noted alignment with earlier antitrust discussions.
  - Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 5.5:
  - Members supported references to water conservation but sought clarity on which zoning regulations affect water efficiency.
  - Proposed adding related concepts such as local food access.
  - Outcome: Support.

## **Section 6: Support urban agriculture**

- Introductory Framing:
  - Outcome: Support without discussion.
- Recommendation 6.1:
  - Refine language for clarity, including adjustments to terminology and removal of unclear phrasing.

- Suggested exploring grant set-asides for urban agriculture and adding workforce development language.
- Clarified references to irrigation versus residential water rates. The phrasing will be refined, but the concept will be retained.
- Outcome: Support.
- Recommendation 6.2:
  - Outcome: Support without discussion.

### **Next Steps, Implementation, and Evaluation**

- Members recommended emphasizing that many recommendations may require legislation.
- Suggested adding subheadings to separate implementation from evaluation.
- Proposed acknowledging the role of community-based organizations, nonprofits, private landowners, agricultural groups, resource conservation districts, University of California Cooperative Extension, and researchers in advancing recommendations.
- Outcome: Further refinement to occur in follow-up sessions.

### **Appendices**

- Glossary:
  - Members discussed refinements to definitions for *Land Steward*, *Producer*, and *First Foods*, recommending clarifications to ensure accuracy, cultural grounding, and inclusivity. Key themes included:
    - Reflecting Tribal stewardship practices.
    - Ensuring non-Tribal land care is not inadvertently excluded.
    - Distinguishing stewardship from production.
    - Acknowledging community-benefit and subsistence activities.
  - Outcome: Members agreed further refinement is needed and will continue definitional work in one-on-one sessions with staff, with the goal of finalizing language at the December meeting.
- **Other appendices**
  - Members debated whether to electronically link to or fully include model ordinances, with preference for inclusion to ensure long-term accessibility and avoid potential dead links.
    - A combined approach (linking and including as part of packaged materials) may be pursued, with details refined in follow-up discussions.
  - Members emphasized the importance of providing concrete examples (e.g., Sacramento County urban agriculture ordinance).
  - Outcome: Members agreed further refinement is needed and will continue work in one-on-one sessions with staff, with the goal of finalizing language at the December meeting.

Members acknowledged that not all remaining edits could be completed during the meeting and discussed follow-up through one-on-one conversations with staff the week of Nov. 17 – 21.

**Public Comment:**

- Mae Piacenza-Jones, Food-Shed Cooperative San Diego, noted significant challenges associated with leasing public land, emphasizing that the interpretation of lease terms can shift when agency staff or legal personnel change. Mae observed that similar challenges arise on school district properties, where program stability often depends on individual administrators' support. Mae encouraged the Task Force to consider how recommendations might promote greater consistency and security in the interpretation and long-term intent of public land lease agreements.

## Work Planning and Next Steps

**Graphic Design:**

Staff shared the November draft Report graphic design mock-up and noted ongoing work to refine captions, alt text, callout box consistency, and overall visual cohesion. Members provided feedback on the trial use of icons and tags, expressing concern that multiple tags create visual clutter. Members recommended limiting tags to the *Summary of Recommendations* or consolidating them into a small number of action-oriented categories. Members also suggested adding brief section overviews, strengthening the table of contents, improving section numbering, and creating section cover pages to support navigation.

Members provided additional feedback on graphics, including the need for captions, improved photo resolution, and careful consideration of cultural symbols to ensure appropriateness and permissions. Members suggested adding a graphic showing the locations of Task Force meetings and engagement sessions across California and recommended developing a more compelling Report title and cover design. Staff will bring title options to one-on-one meetings.

**Timeline:**

Staff outlined the timeline for finalizing the Report:

- A formatted draft will be shared with the Task Force on Dec. 2.
- Final minor edits are due from the Task Force to staff by Dec. 9.
- One-on-one meetings will occur the week of Nov.17 – 21. These will be used to identify any remaining barriers to approval. Only essential edits will be incorporated, and voting options may be presented at the December meeting.
- The Task Force meets on Dec. 11 in Sacramento to finalize and approve the Report for submission.

Members expressed concern about combining a working session and celebration on Dec. 11, and several recommended holding the December meeting strictly as a working session, with a separate, celebratory convening in January or February 2026—once the Report is finalized. Staff will consult SGC leadership on scheduling options.

Members noted that translation of the full Report into Spanish and Mandarin will not be feasible until after the report is final. This process may take several months. Translated one-page outreach materials could be prepared for celebratory meetings. Tailored outreach materials can be discussed during the December meeting.

## **General Public Comment**

- Jamie Fanouse, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Task Force Advisory Committee member, expressed appreciation that the Task Force had incorporated public input from the previous meeting and noted that their coalition valued the responsiveness shown.
- Adam X, Advancing Initiatives, voiced support for adopting the recommendations, particularly those in Sections 1 and 2, and encouraged the Task Force to consider strategies for ensuring ongoing public oversight of implementation. Adam highlighted the opportunity to build on recent legislation, including Senate Bill (SB) 518 and SB 437, and framed the recommendations as foundational to advancing equitable land policy—drawing parallels to constitutional principles supporting efforts to address historic injustices.

## **Meeting Adjourned**

Chair Hawkins and Vice Chair Burgueno provided closing comments and adjourned the meeting at 5:37 p.m.