

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Meeting & Subcommittee Meeting Draft Summaries for Review and Approval

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California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force December 2025 Meeting Summary:

Dec. 11, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Chair Nelson Hawkins called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. Camille Frazier welcomed attendees, provided housekeeping remarks, gave a land acknowledgement, reviewed participation guidelines, and previewed the day's agenda.

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by staff. Members present:

- Nelson Hawkins, Chair
- Irene de Barraicua*
- Nathaniel Brown
- Ruth Dahlquist-Willard
- Darlene Franco
- Lawrence Harlan
- James Nakahara
- Dorian Payán
- Liya Schwartzman
- Thea Rittenhouse (arrived at 9:23)
- Doria Robinson
- Qi Zhou

Members absent:

- Emily Burgueno, Vice Chair

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
- Melissa Moyce, California Strategic Growth Council
- Tessa Salzman, California Strategic Growth Council

- Alex Schweitzer Kroll, California Strategic Growth Council
- Caleb Swanson, California Strategic Growth Council

* *Denotes virtual attendance*

Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of Nov. 13, 2025, Meeting Summary.

Action:

Member Brown moved to approve the meeting summary. Member Dahlquist-Willard seconded.

Task Force Discussion:

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Action:

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

Staff Report

Staff provided updates:

- The Task Force has received written public comment.
- Staff met individually with each Task Force member since the November 2025 meeting.
- A video booth was provided during the lunch break for Task Force members to reflect on their work and next steps.
- Updated budget information.

Public Comment:

None.

Working Session

Members referenced the December 2025 version of the updated [Draft Report](#) and its [appendices](#). Staff provided an overview of the working session and its associated goals and then reviewed key changes made since the November 2025 meeting. The purpose of the working session was to resolve remaining discussion points before voting on the Report later in the day.

The [Language for Task Force Review](#) document was shared on screen for members to engage in detailed discussion. Staff made in-line tracked changes to the document as discussion unfolded, and members expressed their level of support for the various decision points.

Discussion highlights:

Decision 1 (2.5.f):

Task Force Discussion: None.

Outcome: Include language and text box in the Report.

Decision 2 (3.1.a):

Task Force Discussion:

- Grammatical clarification.

Outcome: Incorporate addition.

Decision 3 (3.1.a):

Task Force Discussion:

- Members clarified who is being referenced in this recommendation.
- A member suggested adding language to clarify that all the proposed language is for research, not immediate policy change.
- Members identified the origin of this language.
 - A Task Force member proposed adding this language based on written public comment the Task Force received, review of a relevant academic paper, and discussion with researchers familiar with these issues.
- Members sought understanding of how erosion of rural communities' tax bases can occur.

Outcome: Incorporate additions (3.1.d.ii-vi) and clarify throughout so that sub-bullet points are listed as research topics.

Decision 5 (4.2.g):

Task Force Discussion:

- Members requested that language be added clarifying that these are research requests.

Outcome: Include in Report, ensuring sub-bullets are clearly framed as research topics.

Decision 6 (Producer and land steward definitions):

Staff provided clarifying context for this discussion, reviewing the four alternatives presented to the Task Force. Staff clarified that priority producers and land stewards are

found together throughout the Report. The Task Force measured levels of support for each alternative, all of which lacked substantial Task Force support. Task Force members proposed combining three of these alternatives: adding the proposed language from the staff recommendation, adding the paragraph explaining the Task Force’s process in reaching these definitions in Alternative A, and adding the definitions of producer and land steward in Alternative B.

Task Force Discussion on Task Force proposal:

- Members noted that “land steward” has a close connection to Tribal stewardship and its associated responsibilities.
- Members requested that “Tribal” be added in front of “land steward(s)” throughout the Report.
- Members requested that ancestral and spiritual connection be added to the definition of Tribal land steward.
- Members asked that “activities” in the definition of “producer” change to “agricultural practices.”

Outcome: Include the proposed language from the staff recommendation, add the paragraph explaining the Task Force’s process in reaching these definitions in Alternative A, add the updated definitions of producer and land steward in Alternative B based on the Task Force’s discussion, and change the term “land steward” to “Tribal land steward(s)” throughout the Report.

Decision 7 (Agricultural land equity definition):

Task Force Discussion:

- Some members initially supported the proposed revision to the definition of agricultural land equity, while others expressed concern about conflating equality and equity in the definition of agricultural land equity.
- Some members proposed changing “all people” to “priority producers and Tribal land stewards.” Some members expressed concern with this change due to its narrowed focus, while others noted that this change would clarify the meaning of equity and how it is used throughout the Report.

Outcome: Adopt the following definition of agricultural land equity throughout the Report: “Agricultural land equity is when priority producers and Tribal land stewards have access to secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.”

Decision 8 (6.1):

Task Force Discussion:

- Members discussed the efficacy of urban agriculture incentive zones and whether they should be included in the recommendations.
- Members clarified that the grant programs mentioned should refer specifically to grants that support agricultural activities, food systems, land access, and conservation.
- Members emphasized the importance of ensuring that this research is accompanied by recommendations on how to make urban agriculture incentive zones better.

Outcome: Revise 6.1.d by adding “related to agricultural land access” to “in existing state and local grant programs;” keep 6.1.d.iii; revise 6.2.a, as requested by Task Force members.

Decision 9 (Organizational revisions):

Task Force Discussion:

None.

Outcome: Maintain existing Report organization.

Other Report Edits:

Staff shared a list of necessary revisions that will be completed before the Report is submitted, including:

- Copyediting corrections for grammar, spelling, etc.
- Adding a map displaying the Task Force’s engagement work on p. 11.
- Adding a list of relevant recommendations to each section cover page.
- Ensuring text box and photo placement is appropriate for the text surrounding it.
- Standardizing captions for photos.
- Changing the title of the Report to “Recommendations of” instead of “Recommendations from.”

Task Force Discussion:

- Do not center justify the text on page 2 and in similar places in the Report.
- Add the section of the Report to page headers or footers. Link between sections of the Report so readers can easily jump to relevant text.
- Add the full list of all 109 federally recognized California Tribes before the table in Section 1, noting that these lists are not identical. Change the column header to say, “Reservation or Rancheria Population.” Staff will review the census data and clarify accordingly.
- Use more photos that contain people, not just landscapes.
- Update two members’ titles on page 9.

- Ask the graphic designer if there are ways to improve readability of column formatting.
- Change the caption on page 80 to align with other photo captions.

Public Comment:

None.

Action: Approve Report for Submission

Staff reviewed revisions made to the Report over the lunch break based on Task Force discussion, showing the Report on screen and gradually walking through each change made. Task Force members further clarified that the sub-bullets in 3.1.d should each start by saying something along the lines of “Research into the potential of...” For 4.2.g.i and 4.2.g.ii, Task Force members requested adding “Research evaluating...” and “Research into mechanisms...,” respectively. Task Force members also requested that 6.2.a change to say “Fund research to evaluate the efficacy of...” (regarding urban agriculture incentive zones). Task Force members also requested that 6.1.c change to say, “In new and existing programs that fund agriculture, food system, land access, and conservation...” and that this change be reflected in 6.1.d, too. A Task Force member also noted a typo in the word “stewardship” in Appendix F.

Staff then provided a final review of all additional changes that will be made to the Report before it is submitted, including:

- Reviewing page footers/headers to ensure the sections are clear and adding links to relevant sections within the Report.
- Removing instances of center justification.
- Switching photos of landscapes for photos of people.
- Reviewing column formatting for ease of readability.
- Adding a separate list of all 109 federally recognized Tribes from the Federal Register.
- Reviewing and clarifying data in the table in Section 1.
- Adding a note to Section 1 that the U.S. Census data does not directly correspond to the list of 109 federally recognized California Native American Tribes maintained by the Federal Register.
- Updating “land stewards” throughout the Report to say, “Tribal land stewards.”
- Ensuring all references to definitions are updated throughout the Report.
- Correcting any formatting issues or errors in graphic design due to the approved revisions made in the meeting.
- Changing text and design of the Report based on edits approved by the Task Force during today’s meeting.

- Making minor revisions to formatting for accessibility compliance.
- Copyediting for minor revisions, like correcting punctuation errors or standardizing citations.

Members considered staff’s recommended action: “Approve the text in the Final Report, as revised and presented here today, for submission to the Governor and Legislature in accordance with applicable statutory requirements, and authorize SGC staff to make and incorporate any necessary formatting, compliance-related, and copyediting modifications to the Final Report to ensure it is suitable for submission.”

Action:

Chair Hawkins called for a motion to approve the staff recommendation. Member Nakahara moved that the Task Force approve the staff recommendation. Member Robinson seconded the motion.

Task Force Discussion:

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Action:

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

Next Steps

By Jan. 1, 2026, staff will deliver the Report to the Governor’s Office and follow the appropriate procedures for electronically submitting the Report to the Secretary of State, Chief Clerk of the Assembly, and Office of Legislative Counsel. The Final Task Force meeting will be on Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 1-4 p.m. The Task Force will then have the opportunity to present to the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) at the Feb. 25, 2026 SGC meeting. Staff will work with the Task Force to plan this presentation.

Task Force Discussion:

- Members requested that staff work to identify an opportunity for the Task Force to present to the Governor’s Office and provide legislative briefings.
 - Staff clarified that Task Force members may, in their capacity as members of the public, engage in advocacy and Report promotion.
- Members requested that staff develop an outline for how people can engage with the grant program that is being developed.

- Staff will add this to the media toolkit that is being developed for the Task Force members. Other items in the media toolkit include:
 - A ~5-page Report summary.
 - Fact sheets for specific audiences like priority producers and Tribal land stewards, California Native American Tribes, aspiring farmers, organizations that hold land or provide technical assistance, and local governments.
 - The above resources will be translated into Spanish and Mandarin. A member recommended also translating these materials into Hmong-Mien.
- Staff also shared that they are working to develop a web version of the Report and associated materials. Staff are also working on developing and distributing tailored outreach materials and establishing local assistance provider contracts to assist with Report distribution and promotion.
- Some members requested printed copies to share with their communities. Staff will develop a mechanism for members to request printed copies
- Members also requested having a repository of information gathered through the Task Force’s process that members of the public can access and review. Staff will consider how best to include this on the website.
- Members requested that staff develop PowerPoint templates for members to use when presenting about the Task Force.
- Members requested staff support for presentations at conferences and other events.
- Members also requested a presentation at a joint meeting of the State Board of Food and Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Small-Scale Producer and BIPOC Advisory Committees.

Members next discussed a public letter from United States Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins to Governor Newsom regarding the Task Force’s recommendations. Following Task Force deliberation and staff clarification on Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act requirements, members Nakahara and Dahlquist-Willard agreed to draft a letter to Governor Newsom that clarifies the Task Force’s recommendations and welcomes further discussion. Members Robinson, de Barraicua, Franco, Schwartzman, and Zhou gave consent for their names to be included as signatories to this letter.

Public Comment

- Jamie Fanous, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, offered support to the Task Force with communication, press releases, and more.

- Adam X, advocate and community member, shared that he viewed the public letter from Secretary Rollins to Governor Newsom as disrespectful and inaccurate.

General Public Comment

- Temu Martin expressed support for the Task Force’s Report, especially Sections 1 and 2, and shared that he viewed the public letter from Secretary Rollins as disrespectful, dismissive, and inaccurate.

Meeting Adjourned

Chair Hawkins provided closing comments and adjourned the meeting at 3:34 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Restorative Lands Subcommittee Meeting Summary: Sept. 24, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie opened the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Meagan Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Lawrence Harlan
- Thea Rittenhouse

Members absent:

- Irene de Barraicua
- Doria Robinson

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Camille Frazier, SGC
- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State

Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of Sept. 5, 2025, Meeting Summary.

Task Force Discussion:

- None.

Public Comment:

- None.

Action:

Member Rittenhouse moved to approve the meeting summary. Member Harlan seconded.

Motion passed. (2-0-2). (*2 absent)

Working Session

Staff shared follow-up research from the last meeting, including connections with Donald Tamaki, a lawyer and member of the California Reparations Task Force (RTF). Members requested legal insight on:

- How eligibility was approached by RTF, including in relation to Proposition 209.
- How the Agricultural Land Equity Task Force relates to the work of the RTF.

Staff reviewed related legislation that is currently pending and may influence the draft recommendations:

- AB 57: Allocates 10% of funding from certain home loan programs to descendants of enslaved persons.
- AB 62: Establishes a claims process for victims of racially motivated eminent domain.
- SB 437: Funds research to verify descent and reparative claims.
- SB 518: Creates a Bureau within the Civil Rights Department to verify eligibility and administer programs.

Members agreed to await outcomes on these bills and requested staff provide updates at the October Task Force meeting.

Community Engagement Context

- Engagement input emphasized the need for dedicated funding, strong accountability metrics, and support for cooperative and community ownership models for descendants of enslaved people.
- The Task Force received a letter from organizations that highlighted the Uniform Partition of Heirs' Property Rights Act (2021) and called for a comprehensive study to assess:
 - The extent of agricultural land held as heirs' property.
 - The unique challenges heirs face in maintaining ownership and stewardship.
- Staff clarified that heirs' property issues are particularly prevalent in Black communities, often leading to land loss when succession is unclear.
- Members noted that resolving heirs' property disputes requires specialized legal expertise and suggested funding for legal assistance to address these challenges.

Draft Recommendation Revisions

- 3.4a: Add language acknowledging and addressing the specific needs of Black farmers in all Technical Assistance (TA) and capacity-building programs.
- 3.4b: Add provisions for tailored technical and legal assistance to resolve heirs' land ownership and succession issues.
 - Members noted that 3.4b is covered in the new goal language and should not be duplicated elsewhere.
 - Members emphasized the importance of identifying which entities should provide these services (e.g., state agencies, nonprofits, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs).

- Members agreed language should reference leveraging USDA programs, while staff will flag areas needing further refinement for October.

Eligibility Language and Historical Events

- Members asked whether should use “descendants of enslaved African Americans” across recommendations.
 - Staff agreed to review Reparations Task Force and adjust language accordingly.
- Suggestions were made to clarify references to historical events such as eminent domain and dam-related flooding.
 - Agreement to frame recommendations around determining “eligible historical events” as requiring further legal review and definition.

Cooperative and Community Land Ownership

- Members discussed how recommendations should support cooperative and community land ownership structures, while ensuring language remains clear and understandable.
- Emphasis on providing legal and TA support for multiple business and governance models, leaving choice with community members.

Public-Private Partnerships

- Members reaffirmed the importance of enabling public-private partnerships to contribute to restorative land programs.
- Discussion included the need to ensure philanthropic contributions can be integrated into state programs to address gaps.
- Staff will refine language and consult with California Department of Food and Agriculture and SGC staff who may have further guidance

Next Steps

- Members supported moving the restorative lands proposal forward as Goal 2 for inclusion in the October draft report.
- Staff will:
 - Ensure consistent use of terminology.
 - Incorporate refinements into the October draft, including flagged language for further review.
 - Provide updates on the status of AB 57, AB 62, SB 437, and SB 518 at the October Task Force meeting.
 - Refine eligibility language and philanthropic funding mechanisms.

Public Comment:

- None.

General Public Comment:

- None.

Facilitator Wylie summarized action items and next steps and highlighted upcoming meetings. The meeting adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Goal 4: *Secure Land Tenure* Subcommittee Meeting Summary: Sept. 23, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Meagan Wylie opened the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Irene de Barraicua
- Ruth Dahlquist-Willard
- James Nakahara
- Liya Schwartzman

Members absent:

- None

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Caleb Swanson, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, California State University, Sacramento

Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of September 5, 2025, Meeting Summary.

Task Force Discussion:

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Action:

Member Nakahara moved to approve the meeting summary. Member Dahlquist-Willard seconded. Motion passed. (4-0-0).

Working Session

Goal 4 Revisions

Staff reviewed edits made to Goal 4 recommendations, including:

- Reverting the title of Recommendation 4.2 to its prior version.
- Adding a new bullet to 4.2(h)(ii).
- Clarifying examples in 4.2(b) related to water and soil health.

The Tenant Farmer Bill of Rights remains in progress and will be refined further based on capacity.

Farmer Equity Office (Rec. 4.1) and Regional Coordination

Staff reviewed proposed edits to Goal 4.1, noting significant discussion about interagency communication. Briefing materials with tracked changes will be uploaded for reference.

- Members suggested explicitly adding diversified farms to the recommendation.
- Members discussed whether local and regional coordination should remain distinct from the Farmer Equity Office's role.
 - Some members support keeping these functions separate, noting that a state agency may not be best positioned to streamline local communication.
 - Members highlighted the potential for ag ombuds to serve as liaisons, bringing grassroots concerns to state-level entities.
-
- A member shared at the release of the UC Merced Farmworker Health Study, CDFA Secretary Karen Ross pointed to the Ventura coalition as a model of effective regional collaboration around farmworker wellbeing. Members agreed to maintain Recommendation 4.3(a) as a separate item but ensure alignment across the Farmer Equity Office, nonprofit advocacy groups, and the ag ombuds program, with sub-bullets or cross-references showing their complementary roles.
- Staff will refine language for inclusion in the October meeting draft.

Agricultural Ombuds Program (Rec. 4.2a)

- Members broadly supported the establishment of new, permanent ag ombuds positions and emphasized the need to fund, establish, and resource them.
- Discussion highlighted the importance of:
 - Creating county-level positions housed within non-regulatory bodies (e.g., the University of California Cooperative Extension or Resource Conservation Districts).
 - Adding a statewide coordinator to consolidate input, track patterns, and elevate recommendations from historically underserved producers to regulatory agencies.
 - Establishing an advisory group with grassroots experience to guide the coordinator and ensure accountability.
- Members raised questions about where the program should be housed:
 - Some supported alignment with the Farmer Equity Office or Department of Conservation to strengthen interagency collaboration.

- Others expressed concerns about situating the effort under the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), citing the need for safe, trusted, and inclusive structures.
- Members noted ombuds should serve as practical liaisons who help troubleshoot issues (e.g., permitting, well installation), collect data, and convene regional mini-task forces to inform statewide coordination.
- Regional needs assessments should guide distribution of positions to ensure equitable coverage across the state.
- Staff will draft revised language (including statewide coordination and distribution by regional priorities) for further member input.

Technical Assistance (TA)

- Staff proposed consolidating TA-related recommendations into a single subgoal, creating an umbrella framework. In Goal 4, this includes TA linked to the ag ombuds program, regulatory support for priority producers and land stewards (PPLS), and lease negotiation assistance.
- Members discussed the California Agricultural Land Mediation Program (CALAMP):
 - Recognized as a valuable service but limited in scope.
 - Suggestions to keep language broad and flexible, rather than naming individual programs.
 - Members noted opportunities to expand mediation or legal support services, including for lease disputes, pesticide drift, and labor-related issues.
- Members emphasized clarifying who qualifies as a TA provider:
 - Preference for nonprofit organizations, businesses, and cooperatives that explicitly serve PPLS and land stewards.
 - Consensus to use “no or low cost” language when describing TA services.
- Members agreed on developing a definition of TA in the glossary to avoid repetition across recommendations. This definition should clarify that TA applies directly to farmers, businesses, and cooperatives, not just organizations.
- Overall agreement to broaden and consolidate TA provisions, ensure prioritization of PPLS, and support coordination with community-based and non-regulatory entities.

County-Level Agricultural Land Liaisons

- Members discussed creating city- or county-based liaison positions to support PPLS in navigating access to publicly owned agricultural lands. These liaisons would:
 - Identify and advertise available ag land.
 - Facilitate transactions with PPLS.
 - Collaborate with state/county agencies and TA providers to streamline leases and advocate for equitable access.
- Members noted that current real estate departments often lack expertise in agricultural land leases, creating barriers for small-scale transactions.
- Example: San Diego is beginning to pilot this type of role under its 30x30 efforts, but positions remain rare statewide.

- It was agreed to refine language to clarify intent and build momentum for hiring dedicated liaisons to expand equitable land access.

Regulatory Amendments and Interagency Review (Rec. 4.2)

- Staff proposed edits to Recommendation 4.2, including:
 - Adding language to encourage and, where possible, ensure representation of PPLS in public decision-making bodies.
 - Amending and implementing laws to strengthen land tenure protections, including prohibiting groundwater markets or developing regulatory frameworks to protect tenant farmers.
- Members emphasized the need for clarity in language:
 - A member raised concerns about resource conservation district (RCD) board membership being limited to landholders, suggesting more direct wording beyond “encourage where possible.”
 - Members preferred “ensure” to reflect stronger intent.
- Staff will circulate draft edits, including refinements on groundwater markets and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) provisions, for member review.

Community Input: Land Use and Housing (Rec. 4.3)

- Members reviewed community input recommending that local governments be directed, incentivized, and supported to adopt land use practices that:
 - Support on-farm infrastructure; and
 - Legalize existing informal structures by creating pathways for compliance without penalizing farmers.
- Discussion emphasized that any legalization must still meet minimum health and safety standards.
 - Members cited challenges with farmworker housing and septic requirements, noting the need for flexibility (e.g., composting toilets in some contexts) while maintaining safe conditions.
- Members agreed on the importance of nuanced approaches that recognize the needs of smaller-scale producers without weakening protections that hold larger operations accountable.
- Consideration was given to developing scaled regulatory thresholds (e.g., by acreage or workforce size) to balance equity and safety.

Next Steps

- Staff will prepare revisions for Subcommittee and Full Task Force consideration.
- Draft language with tracked changes will be circulated prior to the October meeting for member review.

Public Comment:

- Yvonne Franco (CA RCD) cautioned that not all RCDs are represented by the statewide association and raised concerns about Division 9 changes.
- Stephanie Moreno reiterated concerns regarding potential Division 9 recommendations, noting existing pathways for non-landowner participation on RCD boards and risks of unintended limitations on RCD authorities.

General Public Comment:

None.

Facilitator Wylie summarized action items and next steps and highlighted upcoming meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Goal 2: *Protected and Thriving Agricultural Lands* Subcommittee Meeting Summary: Sept.19, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie opened the meeting at 9 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Nathaniel Brown
- Dorian Payán
- Thea Rittenhouse (*arrived at 9:48 am)

Members absent:

- None

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Camille Frazier, SGC
- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State

Advisory Committee Members present:

- Kathryn Lyddan

Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of Sept. 2, 2025, Meeting Summary.

Task Force Discussion:

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Action:

Member Payán moved to approve the meeting summary. Member Brown seconded. Motion passed. (2-0-1*). (*One absent.)

Working Session

Language Updates

Staff reviewed proposed revisions from external feedback, including:

- Updating 2.2a to “lease or transfer” (instead of “sell”), which members agreed was more expansive and inclusive of property rights such as covenants and charitable transfers.
- Replacing “protect” with “preserve” throughout Goal 2 language to better align with the Task Force’s stewardship values. Members agreed this change more clearly reflects preservation of agricultural land and soils.

Framing of Goal 2 and Subgoal 2.1

Subcommittee Members considered how to position Subgoal 2.1 within Goal 2. Members agreed that while the Task Force cannot create a full statewide agricultural land conservation plan, the recommendations can serve as the foundation for such a plan. They emphasized that the title and framing of Goal 2 should highlight preserving thriving agricultural land, which conveys stewardship and active use rather than just conservation.

Members discussed whether to remove 2.1 or integrate its concepts into the overall Goal 2 description. They agreed to leave as a separate goal but reduce redundancy where possible. Staff will reflect these revisions in the October draft Report.

Context Section Revisions

Staff presented proposed updates to the context section, aimed at balancing the need to steward agricultural land in the public domain with the reality that land ownership is often tied to farmers’ retirement security. Members agreed it is important to acknowledge retirement as a factor in land sales and affordability but emphasized that expansion of public farmland should not be contingent on retirement programs. They noted:

- Farmers may resist conservation easements if they limit retirement options, underscoring the need for broader retirement supports.
- Expanding public farmland increases accessibility and lowers entry barriers for new producers and businesses.
- Agriculture should be accessible to those pursuing both long-term and shorter-term farming careers.

Staff will adjust language to reflect the importance of retirement options while emphasizing the value of public land, revising “must” to “should” where appropriate, and leaving flexibility for broader discussion of retirement needs elsewhere in the report.

Public Land Holdings

Staff presented input from interagency reviewers and Task Force members cautioning against expanding public land holdings, citing cost, infrastructure, and stewardship capacity concerns. Members acknowledged that state and local governments currently face limitations but emphasized that these challenges stem from historic underinvestment rather than inherent ineffectiveness. Discussion highlighted:

- The potential for public ownership to democratize land access and provide greater accountability compared to reliance on philanthropy or private land trusts.
- The role of community land trusts as promising models for agricultural land use, contrasting with conservation easements that may restrict agricultural uses.
- Recognition that while current capacity is limited, long-term benefits of public ownership could outweigh upfront costs, especially in addressing land affordability.
- Opportunities for cities with resources to steward urban agricultural lands more effectively than counties with fewer resources.

Members agreed that language should distinguish between current capacity constraints and future vision. Member Payán will draft suggested framing language for consideration at the October Task Force meeting, and staff will prepare a flagged draft to capture key tensions for further discussion in October.

Recommendation 2.2.b.ii – Prioritizing Applicants

Subcommittee members considered concerns about operationalizing terms like “community-based” or “cultural humility.” They agreed existing definitions could be referenced and proposed including these in the glossary. Letters of support were suggested as a practical way to demonstrate alignment. No further changes were recommended.

Recommendation 2.2.c/d – Land Trusts and Community Co-Design

Subcommittee members discussed refinements to recommendations to ensure land trusts co-create conservation goals with community-based organizations. Members emphasized:

- The importance of requiring community engagement in defining conservation values, especially for Tribal Nations.
- Moving 2.2d under 2.2c to consolidate recommendations on training, tools, and co-design.
- Clarifying language to reflect accountability to communities, not only private landowners.

Regenerative Agriculture Practices

Members agreed to expand references to technical assistance (TA) to also include funding for implementation of regenerative agriculture practices. They emphasized refining language to include implementation without creating new subgoals.

Recommendation 2.3.b – Local Conservation Easement Programs

Members discussed whether counties and cities could administer agricultural conservation easement programs similar to the Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program (SALC). Advisory Committee member Lydan noted existing examples in Davis, Yolo County, and Sonoma County. The Subcommittee did not add an additional recommendation.

Next Steps

- Staff will integrate changes into the October draft report, including refinements to Goal 2 framing, the context section, and recommendations.
- Member Payán will draft suggested language on public land holdings for the October meeting.
- Staff will add relevant definitions (e.g., “community-based”) to the glossary.

Public Comment:

- Kathryn Lyddan thanked the Subcommittee for their work and offered to assist with developing a clearer cost-benefit analysis of public versus private land conservation approaches.

General Public Comment:

None.

Facilitator Wylie summarized action items and next steps and highlighted upcoming meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Goal 3: *Equitable Land Transition and Land Acquisition* Subcommittee Meeting Summary: Sept. 17, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie opened the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Irene de Barraicua
- James Nakahara
- Thea Rittenhouse
- Doria Robinson
- Qi Zhou

Members absent:

- None

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Camille Frazier, SGC
- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Caleb Swanson, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State

Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of the Sept. 4, 2025, Meeting Summary was tabled for a subsequent meeting.

Working Session

Recommendation 3.1b – Loan Forgiveness and Ecological Practices

Subcommittee Members discussed whether loan forgiveness should be conditioned on ecological or climate-smart agricultural practices. Members raised the following points:

- Definitions: Members emphasized that definitions of ecological agriculture and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) should remain flexible, with Tribal Nations defining TEK for themselves.
- Balancing incentives: While some members cautioned against making loan forgiveness exclusively contingent on adopting climate-smart practices, others supported tying forgiveness to the adoption of such practices as a way to incentivize change and align with state climate goals.
- Terminology: Members recommended using “climate-smart agriculture practices,” which already has state-level metrics, to avoid punitive framing.
- Clarity of language: The phrase “ensuring eligibility for farmer-governed...” was considered dense; members recommended parsing into separate bullet points.
- Program design: Suggestions included modeling forgiveness after the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, where benefits accrue over time, and clarifying that forgiveness applies to priority producers and land stewards (PPLS). Members also recommended combining this with other provisions under 3.1b to ensure clarity.

Staff will revise language to simplify phrasing, align with existing state definitions, and balance incentives with flexibility.

Land Market Monitoring Program (LMMP)

Subcommittee Members revisited the LMMP with input from Advisory Committee Member Adam Calo and community stakeholders. Discussion focused on the relative value of pre-sale versus post-sale reporting, the scope of data collection, and alignment with the program’s original goals. Key points included:

- Survey priority: Members emphasized that a comprehensive statewide survey of agriculturally viable land should be a priority. Making this data public would improve equity for PPLS by counteracting the information advantage corporate buyers already hold.
- Pre- vs. post-sale data: While post-sale tracking may inform future policy, members felt it would have limited short-term impact on land access. Pre-sale surveys and publicly accessible ownership data were seen as more immediately useful.
- Administrative feasibility: Members noted that integrating reporting requirements into county assessor offices could reduce burden and that frequency of reporting should depend on program budget and staffing capacity.
- Integration with existing tools: Suggestions included building on existing farmland mapping programs (e.g., Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program) and aggregating public ownership data into more legible and accessible formats. Innovations could include mapping agricultural land viability, current use, and owner contact information.

Members cautioned that the LMMP should not drift from its core goal of increasing land access for farmers. The survey was viewed as the most powerful tool for this purpose, while post-sale monitoring was seen as more relevant for addressing long-term consolidation trends.

Staff will refine LMMP language to emphasize a survey-first approach while retaining monitoring elements that address corporate consolidation.

Recommendation 3.4 – Land Linking and Technical Assistance (TA)

Discussion focused on the role of regional cohorts of TA providers in supporting land linking:

- Members supported funding both TA providers and coordination, with flexibility to support existing and emerging organizations.
- Clarification is needed to ensure language does not create new burdens or duplicate existing programs.
- Members agreed regional cohorts can be effective but requested refinement to ensure inclusivity and accountability.

Staff will revise and return updated language for review.

Funding Set-Asides and Grant Design

Subcommittee Members debated whether to maintain a 25% set-aside for PPLS in grant funds:

- Some advocated to remove the percentage and instead rename the program as a “Land Transition Grant Fund” dedicated to PPLS. Others suggested increasing the set-aside to 40% if the fund also serves broader populations (e.g., new farmers).
- Members agreed to remove the 25% figure from current recommendations and address set-asides in reference to all state programs elsewhere in the report.
- Discussion also addressed segmenting a general grant fund (e.g., 75% for acquisition, 25% for tenure) to avoid proliferation of multiple new programs.

Revenue and Fees

Members discussed directing revenue from fees on large-scale landowners or corporate ownership toward farmer pension funds or grant programs. Members emphasized aligning fees with land transition goals rather than unrelated infrastructure needs.

Next Steps

Staff will:

- Revise Rec. 3.1b to clarify conditional loan forgiveness, using climate-smart terminology and aligning with existing state metrics.
- Incorporate survey and mapping elements into the LMMP recommendation and flag governance questions for October discussion.
- Refine Rec. 3.4 to clarify funding for TA providers and coordination.
- Update grant fund language, removing the 25% set-aside, renaming the fund, and

exploring segmented allocations.

- Revise fee language to ensure alignment with land transition purposes.

Public Comment:

- William Lipe (Monterey County) raised concerns about water issues, the historical context of Mexican land grants, and public perception of land surveys. He cautioned that agricultural landowners may view inventorying land as preparation for forced purchase.

General Public Comment:

- None.

The meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Goal 1: *Tribal Stewardship and Land Return* Subcommittee Meeting Summary: Sept. 16, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie opened the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Vice Chair Emily Burgueno
- Lawrence Harlan

Members absent:

- None

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Camille Frazier, SGC
- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Caleb Swanson, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, California State University, Sacramento

Working Session

Staff reviewed changes to Goal 1: *Tribal Stewardship and Land Return* recommendations since the August Task Force meeting, including significant edits to the overview section. Members were encouraged to provide detailed feedback in writing or at future meetings.

Staff also noted progress on:

- Inclusion of the Golden Eagle Case Study in the October draft.

- Development of a list of federally recognized Tribal Nations in California, including the Modoc Nation of Oklahoma, with total acreage and landholding data.
- Inclusion of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) tract data for land holdings of Tribal Nations.

Tribal Membership Data

Members and staff briefly discussed the feasibility and risks of including Tribal membership data in the Report. Concerns were raised about data accuracy, reliance on census information, and the importance of Tribal consent. Members requested staff follow up with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) sources, if possible, and clarify data limitations within the report narrative.

Recommendation 1.1 – Tribal Land Return Commission

Subcommittee members discussed whether the proposed Tribal Land Return Commission is the appropriate mechanism to oversee land return. Members raised questions about its role, oversight, and potential for intertribal conflict given its proposed structure as an elected body with regional representation.

Members emphasized that broad Tribal consultation is essential to determine whether the Commission is needed, how it should be structured, and who should oversee it.

Suggestions included:

- Conduct multi-phased outreach with Tribal Nations, including engagement sessions and opportunities to review a draft proposal.
- Embed a consultation process to ensure all Tribal Nations can participate.
- Clarify whether oversight should come from Tribal leadership, a state entity, or regional organizations.

Staff will revise the language to emphasize consultation and co-development of the Commission concept with Tribal Nations before bringing it back to the Subcommittee.

Permanent Advisory Council

Public feedback suggested creating a permanent Tribal Land Equity Advisory Council to guide implementation and accountability. Members supported the idea but recommended housing the Council under the SGC rather than the proposed Commission. Staff will draft revised language accordingly.

Right of First Refusal

Subcommittee members discussed the scope and structure of a right of first refusal (RFR) process. Staff noted the concept appears in both Goal 1 and Goal 3.3 and is still under legal review. Members emphasized the need for clarity and consistency while avoiding redundancy across the report. Key points included:

- Applicability: Members agreed RFR should apply to both public and private lands, including pristine and coastal parcels, not only “disposable” or surplus lands. Staff clarified intent to focus on agricultural lands, though members suggested broadening to include ancestral and non-agricultural state-owned lands.
- Sequence of offers: Members emphasized that Tribal Nations should be offered lands first. After Tribal Nations, other priority producers and land stewards could be

considered. Staff noted some input suggesting farmworkers be prioritized, though members expressed caution to ensure the process does not inadvertently set groups in opposition to each other.

- Jurisdictional issues: Questions arose regarding how the state can mandate RFR for private land sales and whether county and city lands should be included. Members highlighted the need to clarify definitions (e.g., clarification of what qualifies as “public land” and whether county/city-owned parcels should be included) and recognize jurisdictional limits. Staff will coordinate with Goal 3.3 language to better address local government roles.
- Language refinement: Members encouraged staff to refine language around preemptive rights, oversight authority, and the distinction between agricultural and ancestral lands.

Staff will redraft Goal 1 language to reflect these clarifications and alignment with Goal 3.3.

Next Steps

- The Subcommittee will pivot to a two-member working group and meet again in the coming week to continue discussions, including:
 - Goal 1.1a: Transfer of ancestral lands free from restrictions or encumbrances.
 - Potential terminology shifts (e.g., “California Native American Tribes” instead of “Tribal Nations”) and defining traditional Tribal uses.
- Staff will integrate revisions and bring updated Goal 1 language back to members.

Public Comment:

None.

General Public Comment:

None.

Facilitator Wylie summarized action items and next steps and highlighted upcoming meetings.

Staff will work to schedule a follow-up meeting in the coming week.

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Goal 3: *Equitable Land Transition and Land Acquisition* Subcommittee Meeting Summary: September 4, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie opened the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Irene de Barraicua
- James Nakahara
- Thea Rittenhouse
- Doria Robinson
- Qi Zhou

Members absent:

- None

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Caleb Swanson, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State

Working Session

Staff first summarized revisions to Goal 3: *Equitable Land Transition and Land Acquisition* since the August Task Force meeting before inviting Subcommittee discussion. Completed edits include:

- Clarification of Aggie Bonds
- Repositioning of certain subgoals
- Incorporation of Tribal Nation review into funding programs

Subcommittee members did not raise further questions on these items.

Land Market Monitoring (formerly Land Observatory)

Subcommittee members reviewed the proposed renaming of the “Land Observatory” to a Land Market Monitoring Program/Department, with expanded responsibilities to track agricultural land transactions, provide land-linking services, and increase transparency. Members supported the new name and emphasized framing the recommendation around preventing corporate consolidation of farmland and ensuring priority producers and land stewards have access to purchase opportunities. Key points included:

- Public input: Members noted strong public comment urging stricter disclosure requirements, mandatory reporting of agricultural land sales, and protections against anticompetitive off-market purchases.
- Accountability mechanisms: Members discussed requiring all agricultural land transactions to be reported pre- or post-sale, with counties or assessors’ offices providing data. An initial audit of available agricultural land was suggested to establish a statewide baseline.
- Program design: Some members preferred framing this as a “program” rather than a “department” to make implementation less daunting. Members also raised questions about whether to create a new entity or strengthen existing tools, and whether broader alignment under a Department of Agricultural Equity (within CDFA) could provide a centralized backbone for multiple recommendations.

Subcommittee members agreed that further development is needed to define statutory authority, reporting mechanisms, and how the proposed monitoring program would interface with local and state agencies.

Tax Incentives (Rec. 3.1c)

- Members debated proposed tax breaks for landowners tied to certification as “ethical businesses.”
- Several members supported offering tax incentives but cautioned against subjective determinations of “ethical” practices.

Loan and Grant Programs (Rec. 3.1 & 3.2)

- Members agreed to explicitly name farmer cooperatives in funding and loan recommendations, ensuring access to programs and addressing barriers to participation. They emphasized clarity that references should apply to farmer-led cooperatives, not marketing co-ops.
- Members recommended linking forgivable loans to conservation and climate goals (e.g., 30x30) and embedding cooperative access across all relevant Goal 3 recommendations (3.1 and 3.4) rather than limiting it to one section.
- Concerns about administrative burden were addressed, with members noting that standardized reporting could enhance statewide data collection without creating undue barriers.

Land Consolidation

Subcommittee members reviewed draft language to address land consolidation, building on community input and references to the Farmland for Farmers Act (2023). Staff shared options such as limiting certain investment entities from purchasing agricultural land, strengthening disclosure requirements, and exploring mechanisms to prevent speculative acquisitions.

Members expressed opposition to proposals capping farmland appreciation, citing risks to farmers who rely on land value for retirement security. Instead, they emphasized exploring measures such as fees on corporate or investment fund ownership, incentives for farmland transition, and greater accountability for off-market purchases. Members underscored the need to carefully define which entities would be subject to restrictions to avoid unintended impacts on Tribal Nations, farmer cooperatives, or family-owned LLCs. While supportive of addressing corporate consolidation, members cautioned against overly broad or universal rules that could inadvertently harm small farmers or slow farmer-to-farmer land transactions.

Technical Assistance (Rec. 3.4)

The Subcommittee discussed enhancing technical assistance (TA) and capacity building. Members supported:

- Explicitly incorporating farmer cooperatives across funding, loan, and TA recommendations.
- Ensuring TA is culturally competent, with specific reference to serving Black farmers, Hmong farmers, and other underserved communities.
- Expanding TA to include legal services for deeds, titles, and land tenure, as well as support for long-term land retention.

A proposal to create local grassroots advisory councils to guide TA and resource distribution for Black farmers and Black-led organizations received mixed feedback. While members agreed on the importance of ensuring community voices shape TA services, questions were raised about implementation, representation, and compensation for participating farmers.

Next Steps

- Staff will incorporate revisions related to:
 - Strengthening the framing of Goal 3 around preventing corporate consolidation.
 - Explicitly integrating farmer cooperatives across recommendations.
 - Drafting revised language to clarify land consolidation recommendations
 - Adding culturally competent TA and exploring advisory council models.
- Subcommittee members agreed to reconvene for a follow-up discussion in the week of September 15, 2025 (2-hour session).

Public Comment:

- Jamie Fanous (CAFF) expressed appreciation for the Subcommittee’s attention to land consolidation issues and urged further action to prevent corporate ownership of farmland, drawing parallels to corporate housing ownership.

General Public Comment:

- None.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Grants and Resources Subcommittee Meeting Summary: June 27, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Thea Rittenhouse
- James Nakahara
- Liya Schwartzman

Members absent:

- Darlene Franco
- Doria Robinson

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Camille Frazier, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State University

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Approval of the April 7, 2025 meeting summary.

- Motion to approve made by member Nakahara.
- Motion seconded by member Schwartzman.
- Motion passed (3-0-0*)

Public Comment:

None.

Discussion: Best Practices for Program Design

Guest speaker, Tim Bryant, California Department of Conservation (DOC) provided framing remarks and presented three discussion questions related to upcoming DOC program design under Proposition 4:

1. How might resale tools like affordability provisions or shared appreciation be adapted to support land access?
2. What types of advisors typically support new or disadvantaged farmers with land tenure?
3. What are the pros and cons of property size maximums?

Highlights from member discussion:

- There is limited technical and financial support infrastructure for land tenure, particularly for priority producers.
- Members emphasized the need for more technical assistance (TA) providers and better coordination among them.
- Members noted existing explorations into shared appreciation and preemptive purchase rights by organizations like California FarmLink.
- There is opportunity for DOC to learn from examples presented to the Task Force earlier in the year (e.g., the Scottish Land Commission, presentation by Adam Calo, February 2025).
- Concerns were raised about how programs might be structured to overcome legal constraints like the “gift of public funds” issue.

Public Comment:

None.

Working Session

Staff first facilitated a review of previous Subcommittee discussions about the funding landscape and their inclusion in the current draft Recommendations Report (May 2025 version).

Discussion highlights:

- Members reflected on gaps in the funding landscape and the limitations of existing state programs to fund individual land acquisition.
- There was support for exploring public-private partnerships and revolving loan funds as mechanisms to address down payment barriers.
- Members suggested to consolidate and clearly organize recommendations related to different funding mechanisms and refine how programs are presented in the draft report.
- Several members recommended that the report include flexibility and regional tailoring through “menu” options for grant and loan program design.
- The need for intermediaries, such as land trusts or local non-profit organizations, to address timing mismatches between land availability and funding was discussed.
- Members proposed that loan or grant programs should not require that a specific property be identified in order to apply, helping applicants remain competitive in

- fast-moving markets.
- Members emphasized the importance of minimizing administrative burden by clearly identifying which agency could host new programs (e.g., iBank or DOC).

The Subcommittee next reviewed existing and potential tax incentive and related recommendations, including:

- Tax credits for landowners who lease/sell to priority producers.
- Policy changes to allow property tax base transfers for retiring landowners.
- Ideas such as forgivable, tax-exempt loans and seller financing models.

A member shared that Working Group 5 is actively working to update these concepts.

Members discussed how these mechanisms interact with the broader recommendations throughout the report and considered the idea of organizing them into a “best practices for loan program design” section or “menu of options” for flexibility.

Staff and applicable working groups will incorporate subcommittee feedback into the August 2025 draft report to be discussed further at the upcoming Aug. 13-14, 2025, Task Force meeting.

Public Comment:

None.

General Public Comment:

None.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual AB 524 Subcommittee Meeting Summary: June 25, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Irene de Barraicua
- Nathaniel Brown (joined at 11:31 am)
- James Nakahara
- Liya Schwartzman
- Qi Zhou

Members absent:

- Lawrence Harlan
- Doria Robinson

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Camille Frazier, SGC
- Tessa Salzman, SGC
- Caleb Swanson, SGC
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State

Action: Approval of Summary

Approval of the April 18, 2025 meeting summary.

- Motion to approve made by member Zhou.

- Motion seconded by member Nakahara.
- Motion passed (4-0-3).

Public Comment:

None.

Working Session

Caleb Swanson provided a brief overview of AB 524 developments since April, including newly added co-authors, bill amendments, and a legislative timeline. The bill is currently set to be considered by the Senate Agriculture, with a July 18 deadline for advancement. Following summer recess, August 29 is the last day for the Senate Appropriations Committee to meet and report bills for consideration by the full Senate.

Facilitator Wylie reminded the group that the Task Force's position letter is not automatically shared with all legislative committees. Members considered potential next steps:

- Members generally agreed to repurpose the previously submitted Subcommittee position letter, submitted April 22, 2025 to the California State Assembly Committee on Agriculture, with minor updates to reflect current legislative status and to reinforce the desire for future engagement.
- Members discussed ways to strengthen language in the letter to affirm the Task Force's interest in supporting program development and implementation, and future collaboration with the Department of Conservation.
- Members recognized the value in sending an updated position letter to both the Senate Agriculture Committee and subsequently (assuming passage), the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Proposed Edits:

- Modify language in third paragraph, second sentence to state: We understand that the bill as written calls for the involvement of the Task Force, and we look forward to ~~exploring ways the Task Force can support the Department of Conservation in developing the proposed program~~ supporting and developing the proposed program in coordination with the Department of Conservation.

Action Taken:

- Motion to revise and resubmit the position letter to both Senate committees was called by Member Zhou and seconded by Member Nakahara.
- Motion passed (5-0-2).
- Liya Schwartzman will sign the letter for the Senate Agriculture Committee on behalf of the Subcommittee. Qi Zhou will sign for submission to the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- Staff will finalize revisions and coordinate submission with the respective Subcommittee member.

Public Comment:

None.

Facilitator Wylie summarized action items and next steps and highlighted upcoming meetings.

General Public Comment:

None.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Virtual Community Outreach Subcommittee Meeting Summary: May 29, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 3:08 p.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the California Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Nelson Hawkins, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Chair
- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Darlene Franco
- Qi Zhou

Members absent:

- Irene de Barraicua

Quorum was established.

Staff present:

- Tessa Salzman, California Strategic Growth Council
- Caleb Swanson, California Strategic Growth Council
- Meagan Wylie, Sacramento State University

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Approval of the December 2024 meeting summary was postponed. Members requested that the summary be re-sent for review and recommended including summaries at the top of Task Force emails to prompt member feedback.

Working Session and Next Steps

Outreach Timeline and Engagement Activities

Staff reviewed the community engagement plan and timeline leading up to a proposed August 31 deadline for community input on the forthcoming August draft report. Highlights include:

- **May:** Engagement with CDFA small-scale farmer and BIPOC advisory boards.
- **May – June:** UCANR-led engagement sessions, including Tribal-focused sessions.
- **July:** Site visits in Oxnard and Fresno.
- **July–August:** Additional Tribal Engagement sessions and possible one-on-one discussions with Tribal leadership (as requested).
- **By August 31:** Follow-up with all past engagement participants and site visit hosts.

Members discussed the importance of trust-building with Tribal Nations and raised concerns about honorarium levels, outreach materials, and facilitation practices in upcoming UCANR-led sessions. Members recommended involving Tribal experts in planning and contracting.

Integration of Engagement Insights

Staff reviewed how engagement input will be iteratively integrated into the Task Force’s report. Members were invited to highlight key themes or stories to incorporate as case studies, narrative examples, or quotes.

Suggestions included:

- Highlighting underrepresented themes such as racial discrimination, language barriers, and zoning restrictions.
- Using visual components and call-out boxes for a better reader experience.
- Separating survey analyses into an appendix due to limited representativeness.

Several site visits were flagged for potential case studies, including:

- *Golden Eagle Farm:* A fee to trust transfer on ancestral homelands.
- *Fresno County and San Diego sites:* Public land leasing and cooperative models.
- *Susanville:* Emphasis on meaningful partnership with Tribal Nations over a focus on compliance.

Members discussed ways to preserve nuance and offer transparency through lessons learned, storytelling, and potentially an audiovisual (AV) approach to sharing farmer and land steward stories. There was interest in proposing a post-report AV storytelling project and recommending a more comprehensive survey effort, which staff noted could be discussed at the August full Task Force meeting.

Discussion of Report Additions

Members proposed the inclusion of:

- A “Lessons Learned” section on community and Tribal engagement instead of “Best Practices,” documenting successes, challenges, and recommendations for future outreach efforts.
- A more thorough overview of the community engagement process, with an acknowledgment of its scope, limitations, and the value of continued engagement.
- Guidelines for safeguarding confidentiality when featuring stories or recommendations shared by farmers or community participants.

Next Steps

- Staff will review opportunities for incorporating engagement insights into the draft report and explore options for AV storytelling and a future survey recommendation.
- Members were reminded to submit feedback on the May draft of the report by June 1, particularly regarding case studies.
- Staff will begin developing draft language on lessons learned for review by the subcommittee, potentially convening again in September.
- Staff will continue coordinating the distribution of the Tribal leader invitation letter and may seek member support in follow-up efforts depending on responses received.

Public Comment

No public comment.

General Public Comment

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Sustaining Natural and Cultural Resources Virtual Subcommittee Meeting Summary: April 4, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting.

Meeting Called to Order

Camille Frazier, Strategic Growth Council (SGC), started the meeting at 11 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Ms. Frazier provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the [\(SGC\) website](#).

Roll Call

Members present:

- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Thea Rittenhouse

Members absent:

- Darlene Franco
- Lawrence Harlan

Quorum was established.

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Approval of the July 2, 2024, and October 4, 2024 meeting summaries.

Vice Chair Burgueno requested that the summaries be edited to indicate that the Subcommittee meetings were held virtually.

- Motion to approve summaries with revision made by Vice Chair Burgueno.
- Motion seconded by member Rittenhouse.
- Motion passed (2-0-2*), *Members Franco and Harlan absent for vote.

Staff Updates

Staff provided the following updates:

Working Group Updates:

- The **Land Back Working Group** (Members Franco and Burgueno) is scheduled to meet next week to discuss the *Land Back Special Report*, review related ideas in the draft report, and identify potential case studies for inclusion in the report.
- The **Public Lands Working Group** (Members Harlan and Schwartzman) discussed strategies to increase access to underutilized public lands, leasing terms, and mechanisms such as a first right of refusal for Tribal Nations when the state disposes of land.

Research Updates:

- **Mapping Requests:** Staff presented three existing maps on ancestral lands, agricultural lands, and public lands. Staff are coordinating with the LCI mapping team to explore further mapping possibilities. A comprehensive update is scheduled for the May 14-15, 2025, Task Force meeting.
- **Treaty Research:** Staff summarized research efforts on ratified and unratified treaties. Member Harlan had previously noted that the treaty with the Klamath Tribes was ratified in 1866. Staff reviewed additional resources, including materials from Oklahoma State University.

Legislative Updates:

- Senate Bill (SB) 310 passed in 2024 and allows the California Natural Resources Agency and local air districts to partner with federally recognized Tribal Nations on cultural fire agreements.
- Staff provided an overview of pending key bills relevant to the Subcommittee's work including SB 462 (Cortese), Assembly Bill (AB) 1485 (Macedo), and AB 524 (Wilson).
- During the March 27, 2025 Task Force meeting, members decided to form a subcommittee to track AB 524 and consider drafting a position letter.
- Staff will continue monitoring the progress of these bills.

Staff also shared key takeaways from Dr. Risling-Baldy's presentation on Land Back concepts, originally delivered to the Land Access, Acquisition, and Ancestral Land Return (LA3) Subcommittee, and provided highlights from Michelle Lee's presentation during the Agricultural Land Access and Stewardship Series.

Public Comment:

None.

Working Session

Staff reviewed the draft resolution language regarding the scheduling of future (non-calendared) full Task Force meetings, as developed by the Task Force at the March 27, 2025, meeting. Vice Chair Burgueno proposed revising the draft language to require that both the Chair and Vice Chair ("and" instead of "or") be available for meetings. The revised resolution is scheduled for action at the May 14–15, 2025, Task Force meeting.

Staff next provided updates on Tribal Engagement and Consultation:

- **Susanville Engagement Session:** Scheduled for May 13, 2025, from 4-6 p.m. Outreach to Tribal Nations in surrounding counties is underway.
- **Virtual Engagement Sessions:** Planning is in progress for additional sessions focused on Southern California and the Central Valley, to be held by the end of July. Vice Chair Burgueno offered to help support a Southern California session. Member Franco previously expressed interest in a virtual Central Valley focused session.
- **Formal Consultation:** Staff will initiate the formal Tribal consultation process, which will include using the contact list from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and inviting Tribal Nations to review and comment on the Task Force's draft report.

During the March 27, 2025, Task Force meeting, members emphasized the importance of reconnecting with site visit hosts and speakers after the report is finalized to share how their input informed the recommendations. Members also noted that follow-up with Tribal Nations will be necessary once the report is complete.

Staff next presented an updated list of the nine *draft* report "goals" which incorporates feedback from the March 27, 2025, meeting. Staff requested member reflections on this list. Members highlighted the following:

- The need to define key concepts such as "return" and "sovereignty" to ensure clarity for all readers.
- The need to clearly distinguish between land acquisition and land return.
- The importance of embedding historical and contemporary contexts of Tribal sovereignty throughout the report.
- The value of including specific case studies and actionable recommendations.

Public Comment:

None.

General Public Comment

None.

Staff reviewed next steps, action items, and shared upcoming Task Force meeting dates. The meeting concluded at 12:04 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Land Tenure Subcommittee Meeting Summary: January 29, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council ([SGC](#)) [website](#).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Nathaniel Brown
- James Nakahara
- Liya Schwartzman

Members absent:

- Doria Robinson

Quorum was established.

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summary

Approval of September 19, 2024, meeting summary.

Task Force Discussion:

No discussion.

Action:

Vice Chair Burgueno moved to approve the September meeting summary. Member Schwartzman seconded the motion.

Motion passes (4-0-1*) *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Staff Updates

Staff have extended a guest speaker invitation to the Indian Land Tenure Foundation. They have also been working to find a speaker to address subcommittee members' questions regarding the

Subdivision Map Act. A member suggested reaching out to the Association of Farmers and Rural Appraisers.

Working Session

Staff reviewed the headings in the Land Tenure section of the draft report and requested feedback. Subcommittee members shared the following:

- Infrastructure, housing, and equitable access to water resources are key components of land tenure and should be included.
- Increasing equitable governance in easements and covenants should be included in the report.

Staff then asked if and how subcommittee members would like to address issues pertaining to climate change and insurance. Members shared the following:

- These two topics are tightly connected, and farmers are struggling to get and maintain insurance coverage because of climate impacts.
- Farmers need timely, flexible, and direct capital provided to them so that they can respond to insurance and climate challenges, including acute, intense climatic events; slow, ongoing climatic impacts; and more.
- It would be helpful to hear from someone knowledgeable about California's new insurance rules.
 - Can affordability and access be mandated in these new rules?
- The report should explicitly connect land equity to the ecological benefits small- and medium-scale producers can have on the land.
 - Without long term land access, folks are unable to invest in infrastructure promoting climate resilience.
- Land access and tenure must be addressed before focusing on climate adaptation.
 - Smaller producers face greater disaster recovery challenges, particularly those who lack crop insurance and financial equity from land ownership.
- Perhaps property taxes from high-value properties could be used to establish an emergency relief and/or climate resiliency fund.
 - Perhaps farmers could be paid for sequestering carbon while landowners with fallowed land or engaging in carbon-releasing practices would be required to pay a financial penalty.

Staff then asked subcommittee members to consider draft recommendations regarding landowner-tenant relationships. Concerning the recommendation to establish a tenant bill of rights, members suggested the following:

- Review the residential tenant bill of rights.
- Consider including the below in the bill of rights:
 - Right to harvest,
 - Right to leases in tenant's preferred language,
 - Right to dispute resolution and mediation services,
 - Right to 60-day notice prior to lease termination,

- Right to annual lease renewal if a lease continues for 60 days without objection,
- Right to fair, clear, and easy-to-interpret lease language,
- Right to default lease renewal if nonrenewal is not explicit, and
- Right to rent stability.
- After a 2–3-year period, 5–10-year leases should become standardized.
- Create different lease models for leases on public land, private land, and land managed by a land trust.
 - Perhaps land trusts are aligned closely enough with public land to be grouped together for this purpose.
- Enforcement is important to consider as currently tenants are largely unable to take a landowner to court to ensure enforcement.
- Members discussed how this recommendation may align with Tribal Nations.
 - A member shared that they would look into this for their Tribe, and that a template lease agreement may be a helpful tool but that each lease arrangement with a Tribal Nation would be specifically tailored to the Tribal Nation’s circumstances.
- A short-term working group composed of members Nakahara and Schwartzman was created to further consider these ideas.

Regarding the recommendation to develop mechanisms that allow tenant farmers to retain the monetary value associated with improvements made to leased land, subcommittee members shared the following:

- Some improvements are appreciable (soil improvements), others are depreciable (wells, barns), while others may have a bell-curve-like appreciation distribution (orchards), and they will need to be treated differently as a result.
- Equity building leases, containing provisions like buy out clauses, are uncommon but something members would like to explore.
 - Some equity building leases allow tenants to own structures like buildings or barns on leased land, which they can later sell. However, members noted this might conflict with California’s Subdivision Map Act and request insight from an expert on the matter.

Regarding the recommendation to create incentives for long-term agricultural leases, members shared the following:

- Other states can be looked to for examples.
- This is often achieved through tax incentives and aligns with succession discussions.
- The recommendation should be modified to only support incentives for long-term agricultural leases for socially disadvantaged and historically underserved farmers, ranchers, and Tribal land stewards.

Regarding the recommendation to increase access to legal support and fund technical assistance (TA) providers who act as neutral mediators to assist with contract and relationship development, members shared the following:

- TA providers are often nonprofits, but farmers frequently need help paying for advice nonprofits do not offer, such as legal support.
- TA providers can provide pass through funds to farmers for subsidized access to services not covered by federal or state grants.
- There is a lack of experts with specialized agricultural knowledge.
- The State should work to connect farmers with existing TA providers and resources that demonstrate cultural competency.
- Resources and assistance should be provided to farmers in timely and flexible ways, and one-off consulting should also be allowed.
- Resources and TA must be coordinated for maximum effectiveness.

Members also expressed a desire to include a recommendation in the report that for every acre of agricultural land developed, a designated acreage be placed into agricultural land mitigation banks and managed as incubator farms.

Additionally, members discussed the Placer Land Trust's recent project advancement grant from the California Council of Land Trusts for the Owl Creek Land Back project in Forestville, California. They expressed a desire to hear from the California Council of Land Trusts and Tribal Nations involved in similar projects to learn about their experiences and outcomes.

Public Comment:

- Daniel Barth

General Public Comment:

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Land Access, Acquisition, and Ancestral Land Return Subcommittee Meeting Summary: January 28, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 1:04 p.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website.](#)

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Nelson Hawkins, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Chair
- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Nathaniel Brown
- Ruth Dahlquist-Willard
- Darlene Franco
- Liya Schwartzman

Members absent:

- Lawrence Harlan
- James Nakahara
- Doria Robinson
- Qi Zhou

Quorum was established.

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summary

Approval of September 26, 2024, meeting summary.

Task Force Discussion:

No discussion.

Action:

Vice Chair Burgueno moved to approve the September meeting summary. Chair Hawkins seconded the motion.

Motion passes (3 ayes, 0 nays, 3 abstentions, 4 absences).

Speaker

Staff introduced guest speaker Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy, Rou Dalagurr: Food Sovereignty Lab & Traditional Ecological Knowledges Institute, Cal Poly – Humboldt.

Dr. Risling Baldy provided a presentation on Land Back, sharing the following and more:

- Land Back began in 1493.
- A good land acknowledgement should be followed by action.
- The [California #LandBack Special Report](#) includes policy recommendations.
- The [panel session recordings](#) from the 2023 Northern California Land Back Symposium contain valuable information.
- Native people know a time before colonialism and have carried that knowledge through generations, and they know what the world would be like post-colonization.
- Tribal Nations have proven to be great environmental land stewards, increasing biodiversity and restoration.
- Governor Newsom has acknowledged the connection between land return and climate resiliency.
- Land return should be perceived as joyful.
- A part of the story of the Wiyot land return.
- Land ownership is incredibly stratified.
 - White families are significantly wealthier than all other ethnic groups.
 - The top 1% of households own approximately 40% of non-home real estate.
 - The top 10 agricultural landowners are white.
 - White Americans own more than 98% of U.S. land.
 - The two families owning the most land in California, Oregon, and Washington own eight times more land than all California Tribal Nations combined.
- Forty-five percent of California land is owned by the federal government.
- Nationally, Tribal Nations have roughly 56 million acres of land in trust with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- Land trusts own more land than Tribal Nations.
- Tribal Nations lost land as a result of the gold rush, allotment, federal government acquisition, and more.
- Treaties with California Tribal Nations were drafted but ultimately never ratified.

A question-and-answer session was then hosted between subcommittee members and Dr. Risling Baldy where the following was shared:

- Subcommittee members reaffirmed that for Land Back to be true Land Back it must be unconditional.

- Dr. Risling Baldy encouraged viewing the theft of land from California Tribal Nations akin to the theft of one's computer; the computer should be returned without conditions, as should land back to California Tribal Nations.
- Members asked about the details of the Wiyot land return, and Dr. Risling Baldy shared the following:
 - The land returned was considered surplus land and significantly degraded, but it was returned without restrictions.
 - The Wiyot people used their time, money, and resources to restore the land.
 - The Wiyot people created a land return organization.
 - Cal Poly – Humboldt also directly returned land to the Wiyot people through a grant that it received.
- Members noted the potential difficulty of determining which Tribal Nation a piece of land should be returned to, in response to which Dr. Risling Baldy shared the following:
 - Tribal Nations should be asked how to address such challenges.
 - All California land is associated with California Tribal Nations.
 - This work may take time, so it is important to start the work now.
 - Opportunities should be created for Tribal Nations to come together and engage with each other on this topic.
- Dr. Risling Baldy also shared the following:
 - California Tribal Nations should be able to set the context and goals of the land returned to them.
 - Current state programs, such as 30x30, often place restrictions on land returned to Tribal Nations, but Tribal Nations know how to build without harming the environment.
 - State officials and other government employees engaging with Tribal Nations should figure out how to meet the needs of Tribal Nations rather than focusing on all the ways those needs currently cannot be met.
 - Tribal Nations are often burdened with too many engagement requests; those engaging with them should respect this.
 - Co-management agreements should have Tribal Nations as the primary manager and should advance the needs and desires of Tribal Nations; authority should not be split evenly.
- Members asked for Dr. Risling Baldy's input on recommendations for the Task Force to consider including in its report, to which she suggested the following:
 - Increase funding for Tribal Nations to acquire and restore land.
 - Be explicit that the goal is land return.
 - In hiring decisions, prioritize members of Tribal Nations and their perspectives, along with those who have received education on matters pertaining to Tribal affairs.
 - In California state government agencies, have an employee or team of employees directly working with Tribal Nations on land return.

Working Session

The Subcommittee then discussed key takeaways from the guest speaker presentation, including the following:

- Dr. Risling Baldy used clear, easy-to-understand language to effectively convey what true Land Back is and how it is possible without stipulations.
- The caretaking of land by Tribal Nations leads to different outcomes than with developers.
- The statistics in Dr. Risling Baldy's presentation can be helpful in establishing the background and context for the Task Force's work.
- Land return often requires funding for planning and restoration, not just land maintenance.
- Land trusts have many challenges associated with them.
- The consolidation of land ownership in a few hands demonstrates that current conditions are systemic.

Staff then asked what additional questions Task Force members may have. Subcommittee members shared the following questions:

- With so much California land held by the federal government, what can California's national representatives do to transfer federal land back to Tribal Nations?
- How does the presentation from today connect with Tribal land trusts?
 - How and why was the Native American Land Conservancy developed?
 - Who were the key people involved?
 - What has the process been like?
 - Has it produced true land return or co-management?
 - What language do Tribal land trusts use?
 - How long did it take to set up these Tribal land trusts?
 - How many have been set up?
- Could a certain percentage of the State's budget go to funding land return?
- Could a system be developed that grants Tribal Nations first right of refusal when land becomes available for purchase and then grants socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers second right of refusal?
 - Can land acquisition under a first right of refusal be of no cost to Tribal Nations?

The subcommittee then discussed next steps:

- Member Franco will join the Land Back Working Group.
- Member Schwartzman will join the Land Succession Strategies Working Group.
 - Staff will follow up with this working group.
- Staff will follow up with the Land Markets Working Group after the February meeting.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

General Public Comment:

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Land Use Governance and Sovereignty Subcommittee Meeting Summary: January 16, 2025

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting

Meeting Called to Order

Staff started the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Staff provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council ([SGC website](#)).

Roll Call

Staff conducted roll call. Members present:

- Dorian Payán
- Irene de Barraicua

Members absent:

- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair

Quorum was established.

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Approval of September 17, 2024, meeting summary.

Task Force Discussion:

No discussion.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Action:

Member de Barraicua moved to approve the September meeting summary. Member Payán seconded the motioned.

Motion passes (2-0-1*) *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Working Session

Staff Updates:

Staff provided updates on guest speaker requests. Staff are working to schedule presentations from The Circle Law Group and The Indian Land Tenure Foundation.

Staff proposed sharing the Grants and Resources Subcommittee's research findings on the Department of Conservation's Farmland Conservancy Program and the California Natural Resources Agency's Tribal Nature Based Solutions Program in lieu of separate research or guest speaker presentations for this subcommittee.

Staff then shared an opportunity to collaborate with a team of environmental law researchers examining local land use planning for climate action. The team is creating policy briefs to assist mostly local governments in advancing climate goals, and the team is interested to adapt their work to contribute to the work of the Task Force. Staff proposed having this subcommittee and the Sustaining Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee meet with the team of researchers to identify questions related to land use policies and regulations and associated impacts on equitable agricultural land access.

The research team would conduct research based on the discussion, write a policy brief draft, then host a half-day workshop to discuss and refine the policy brief. The final policy brief would be presented to the full Task Force to consider and included in the final report as deemed relevant.

Subcommittee members shared they view this as a valuable opportunity and requested to move forward with it.

Staff next provided updates on research requests. Regarding evaluating what municipalities are doing to integrate urban agriculture in their general plans, staff will share a searchable database of California's local governments' general plans and will share this research request with a member of the Advisory Committee once established.

Regarding considering how to equip the statements made in Governor Newsom's Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands with regulatory power, staff proposed this be considered by the Land Access, Acquisition, and Ancestral Land Return Subcommittee. Subcommittee members approved.

Regarding cultural fire, staff noted that this issue is being considered in the Sustaining Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee and recommended organizing a joint working group between the two subcommittees. Subcommittee members supported this idea. Member Payán committed to being the subcommittee's representative for this working group. Staff will propose this to the Sustaining Natural and Cultural Resources Subcommittee at its February meeting.

Draft Language Review

Staff shared the draft definition of sovereignty and sought subcommittee members' feedback. Key feedback included:

1. Add the concepts of care and responsibility for the land rather than just control over it.
2. Note the difference between autonomy and sovereignty, where sovereignty is more relational, and autonomy is more independent.
3. Recognize that all of California is the traditional land of California Tribal Nations and the discussion must begin with Tribal sovereignty; at the same time multiple forms of sovereignty can exist simultaneously for different communities. The two draft concepts of sovereignty are compatible.

4. Advance sovereignty and access to land for those who have tended the land well, especially farmworkers who have been working the land for decades.

Members also noted that process is a key aspect of respecting the sovereignty of the communities the Task Force's recommendations seek to serve, and the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations should be guided by additional future community input.

Staff then asked for subcommittee members to reflect on the benefits of and issues caused by easements. Regarding benefits, members noted that they are perpetual agreements that conserve agricultural land. They can also reduce market cost and help organizations that can't hold title to the land, like "shoestring" agricultural groups and non-federally recognized Tribal Nations.

Regarding issues, members noted that easements are the first thing landowners are offered when considering conservation but do not spark further introspection or reckoning with the history of the land or equitable outcomes. Further, subcommittee members noted restrictions on autonomy arise from limitations on who can hold the land. They further shared that easements can limit what landowners may do on the land, harming their ability to live on and make a living on the land. When easements are drafted, if certain groups are absent from the discussion, their vision for the land is not considered in its development.

Staff next shared draft recommendations relating to easements and covenants for subcommittee member review and asked for feedback. Subcommittee members suggested the following:

1. Establish best practices that advance cultural competency.
2. Create more impactful easements with less administrative burden.
3. Include potential stewards of the land in the easement development process.
4. Establish a hypothetical new accreditation program for California focused on advancing cultural competency and equity.
5. Make accreditation necessary for land trusts looking to advance buy-protect-sell.
 - a. When land is sold, community control is lost. Perhaps the "sell" portion of buy-protect-sell can be rethought to advance community control and benefit by being transferred to a public agency or community organization.
6. Allocate State financial support to land trusts in association with certain criteria, such as:
 - a. Length of existence,
 - b. Connection with the community,
 - c. Demonstrated cultural competency, and
 - d. Ability to engage members of priority communities.
7. In relation to the draft recommendation to require the sale of property protected by agricultural conservation easements be sold to a qualified agricultural producer, define who a qualified agricultural producer is, including:
 - a. Socially disadvantage farmers and ranchers,
 - b. Individual entrepreneurs,
 - c. Socially oriented entities,
 - d. Agroecological principles, and
 - e. Cooperatives.
8. Ensure easements and covenants create an agricultural legacy that allows for future generations to steward the land.

Members noted that, even with easements, the price of land can still be a significant challenge. These programs should be paired with mechanisms and incentives to make resale prices lower.

Staff then shared a proposed recommendation for addressing urban sprawl and its threat to farmland. Members shared the following feedback:

1. There is a tension between urban agriculture and the ever-present need for housing.
2. Sovereignty entails not just access to land but also access to necessary resources.
3. There should be increased collaboration between California's urban and rural environments:
 - a. Urban housing should be more affordable to alleviate pressure on rural land development for housing.
 - b. Infrastructure should be developed and improved to allow people to live in cities and commute to work on their farms.
 - i. Everyone in the agricultural industry should have access to their place of work within a certain amount of time without needing to live very rurally or on the farm.
 - c. Akin to the State's existing initiatives, like the California Natural Resources Agency's Outdoors for All initiative, initiatives should be advanced that increase access to agricultural land.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Staff reviewed the day's discussion and key action items. Staff will schedule the next subcommittee meeting to take place in late February or early March. Staff highlighted upcoming meetings of the Task Force.

General Public Comment:

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Community Outreach Subcommittee Meeting Summary: December 13, 2024

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting

Meeting Called to Order

Facilitator Wylie started the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Facilitator Wylie provided housekeeping information for all meeting participants. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council ([SGC website](#)).

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by the facilitator. Members present:

- Qi Zhou
- Irene de Barraicua
- Nelson Hawkins, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Chair

Members absent:

- Emily Burgueno, Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Vice Chair
- Darlene Franco

Quorum was established.

Action: Approval of Past Meeting Summaries

Approval of July 23, 2024, and October 7, 2024, meeting summaries.

Task Force Discussion:

No discussion.

Action:

Member Zhou moved to approve the July and October meeting summaries. Chair Hawkins seconded the motion.

Motion passes (3-0-2*) *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Working Session

Community Outreach Overview

Staff reviewed the Task Force's outreach and engagement efforts, including:

- Project website
- Email list
- Written communication
- Event and conference participation: attended two events; two upcoming conferences include sessions hosted by the Task Force
- Site visits: 13 attended to date
- Guest speakers: 13 hosted to date
- Land Access Experiences Survey, available in English, Spanish, and Chinese
- Community engagement sessions
- Outreach toolkit, which includes: a two-page informational flyer, a fact sheet, QR codes to the website, business cards, and outreach language templates

Member de Barraicua requested that the Central Coast Small Farmer, Rancher, and Fisherfolk Forum that she attended in October of 2024 in Santa Maria, CA also be noted in the tracking of the Task Force's engagement. Staff emphasized their willingness to support members who attend other events or engage in outreach efforts and asked that members share this information, such as through email or a phone call, to help track outreach activities.

Staff reviewed tasks accomplished to date in the community outreach work plan and the proposed plan for 2025, noting that community engagement sessions will occur from April to August. A member asked if surveys will be distributed at site visits. Staff confirmed they can provide hard copies of the survey to serve as engagement tools during site visits. Staff plan to share the survey with past site visit hosts as well. Staff are also developing a compendium of information and insights gathered from site visits.

A member inquired about the possibility of scheduling site visits in between quarterly meetings. Staff noted this is an option and expressed willingness to assist in coordinating these.

Survey

Staff reviewed the survey's context and goals, emphasizing its focus on reaching priority communities identified by the Task Force, specifically those working to steward the land, such as producers and members of Tribal Nations. The survey serves as both a data collection tool to validate ("ground truth") the Task Force's efforts and priorities and as a conversation starter. While aiming to gather as many responses as possible to ensure meaningful insights, the results of this survey will be reported out in tandem with related surveys.

Staff reviewed survey distribution efforts. The survey is available to the public on the Strategic Growth Council's website and has been shared directly with over 100 community-based organizations and advocates. Targeted outreach is ongoing to ensure the survey reaches those the Task Force seeks to engage. Additionally, various agencies have distributed the survey through various channels including the California Department of Food and Agriculture's social media and blog, the California Department of Housing and Community Development's Tribal Affairs email list, the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation program's general listserv, a farmer and rancher listserv associated with California Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Strategic Growth Council's social media.

As of December 12, 25 people had responded to the survey – 23 in English and two in Spanish. More direct engagement with Chinese farmers is underway to ensure their representation in the survey. Member de Barraicua shared an employee of her organization is meeting with farmworkers on the Central Coast and intends to distribute the survey. Members emphasized the importance of engaging the Hmong farming community and farmers who speak Tagalog, suggesting community engagement sessions as a potential strategy.

Members inquired about translating the survey into Vietnamese. Staff explained the survey was not translated into Vietnamese due to limited capacity but noted that support is available for individuals who wish to complete the survey in other languages.

The survey has proven to be a valuable engagement tool. Many respondents indicated interest in receiving a copy of the Task Force’s recommendations and being added to the Task Force’s email list. Many respondents who shared they have received grants and loans indicated their willingness to participate in interviews.

Members asked if the survey would remain open for responses during the forthcoming community engagement sessions, to which staff responded yes.

Community Engagement Sessions

Staff presented the proposed plan for community engagement sessions, highlighting the goal to share drafts of the Task Force’s report and gather iterative community feedback. The sessions will occur from March/April through August 2025 with an anticipated total of eight sessions. Priority will be given to ensuring diversity in language, race and ethnicity, geography, and Tribal Nations.

Staff proposed a general format for these sessions:

- Introduce Task Force
- Present a subset of draft recommendations
- Participant discussion
- Output: summary report of major takeaways

To facilitate these sessions, are considering a collaboration with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR), leveraging their broad geographic reach and connections to diverse communities. Additionally, staff are working with the members of Tribal Nations on the Task Force to design and host engagement sessions specifically with Tribal Nations.

Members proposed prioritizing geographic diversity when designing these sessions. They inquired why staff aim to partner with UCANR and whether other organizations are being considered. Staff explained this partnership decision is influenced by capacity, conflict-of-interest considerations, and contracting limitations. They also noted that UCANR may subcontract with other organizations to host the sessions, aligning with members’ emphasis on the value of partnering with local community organizations.

Members asked if funding is allocated for these sessions. Staff confirmed that each session has a dedicated budget and that attendees will be compensated for their participation.

Staff sought input on whether the sessions should be exclusive to producers or open to others, such as technical assistance providers. Members supported limiting the sessions to land stewards. Members asked about the expected size of each session. Staff expect around 20 attendees per session. Members asked if the sessions will be advertised and open to the public, to which staff responded no.

Members shared they view these sessions as opportunities for ground truthing, identifying barriers and challenges producers face, along with success stories, to share with the legislature and Governor. A member asked if the sessions would include an educational component, stating that they view these sessions as both a platform to provide information and a space to acquire feedback. Staff encouraged members to consider how the Task Force's recommendations will be incorporated into the sessions.

A member highlighted the importance of hearing from immigrant farmers who have successfully acquired and retained land, noting that these farmers could provide insights into the challenges and barriers they faced and the resources they utilized to overcome them. The member also stressed the need to create safe spaces where farmers feel comfortable to share their experiences. Staff acknowledged this need and shared that the community partner will assist in designing the engagement sessions to ensure they are welcoming and safe for attendees. Staff noted that alternative forms of engagement, like site visits, can be utilized and may be better suited for certain communities.

Staff asked subcommittee members to consider the role of Task Force members in these engagement sessions, including whether they would be willing to co-host. Member de Barraicua expressed willingness to assist with an engagement session on the Central Coast. Chair Hawkins said he could support a session in March or April.

Staff inquired about members' preferences for sharing the information garnered from the listening sessions with the Task Force. Members recommended the information first be shared with the subcommittee before being presented to the broader Task Force at the August meeting. They also requested a discussion during the May meeting to address the format and use of information obtained from these sessions. Members also noted the value of presenting such information in visual formats, such as PowerPoint presentations or videos.

A member asked if interviews will be conducted as part of the listening sessions. Staff clarified that interviews are a separate engagement effort. While some interviews will focus on grant and loan programs, staff noted others could involve technical assistance providers or take place during site visits.

Regarding engagement at conferences and events, a member suggested displaying a QR code on a screen that links to the survey, along with reviewing survey questions to guide conversations. Staff noted their intention to plan discussions with conference and event session co-hosts and indicated that new, event-specific questions can be developed.

Members requested that staff develop a document outlining key talking points for the Task Force members to use when conducting outreach. Staff agreed to draft this resource.

Staff encouraged members to reflect on the Task Force’s outreach thus far and share any feedback or concerns with staff via email or during the next Subcommittee meeting planned for early March. Facilitator Wylie will reach out in January for members’ availability.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

General Public Comment:

No public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Grants & Resources Subcommittee Meeting Summary: July 10, 2024

DRAFT until approved at subsequent meeting

Roll Call

The meeting was called to order around 10:00 a.m. Roll call was conducted by Meagan Wylie, facilitator. Members present:

- James Nakahara
- Thea Rittenhouse
- Doria Robinson
- Liya Schwartzman

Members absent:

- Irene de Barraicua

Welcome and Housekeeping

Meagan Wylie provided information on Zoom policies for online attendees, and the public comment process. She discussed the meeting plan and code of conduct. Slides and materials presented during the meeting are available on the Strategic Growth Council [\(SGC\) website](#).

Working Session & Next Steps

Subcommittee Goals

Members determined and discussed the following goals for the *Grants and Resources* subcommittee:

Examine existing resources and their impacts to better understand structural challenges and resource gaps, with a primary focus on programs available in California.

Members suggested that before making recommendations, it is necessary to examine the set of existing resources to assess to what extent they produce outcomes that address structural challenges of land access inequities. From there, the subcommittee could identify gaps in the landscape, with a primary focus on programs available in California.

To better understand the impacts of existing programs, members suggested developing a set of metrics to analyze program outcomes. Key details include the number and acreage of land transfers, demographics and location of beneficiaries, and the type of land involved, and how

long farmers maintain land tenure after lands are transferred. Also of importance is understanding the number of applicants versus awardees (i.e., oversubscription rates), and the effort involved in applying as compared with program outcomes.

To better understand the efficacy of technical assistance (TA) programs, members suggest gathering demographic and geographic data of those accessing assistance and conducting interviews with recipients to understand outcomes and barriers to address. One key issue raised is that while some TA resources fill essential and valuable niches, others have been created in response to overly complicated government grant application requirements.

Provide an overview of best practices to inform final Task Force Recommendations, including for TA support.

This may include ideas for how to pair existing TA programs with grant and financing programs, adjusting eligibility requirements, defining a set of values to guide future programs, suggestions for building and administering grant programs so that TA is not inherently required to complete grant and financing applications, and developing of a road map or model for how to effectively navigate these opportunities. This process may include an overview of existing models and ideas that are effective in addressing challenges and gaps.

Working Session

Members next referred to the Agricultural Land Equity Resource List provided in the May 9, 2024 Briefing Packet. They discussed challenges in navigating grant programs for farmers, including complexity and other barriers to access.

The following gaps in the existing set of resources were identified:

- Programs are not consistently funded.
- Not all programs or organizations are resourced enough to support the entire State of California.
- Many resources can be spent to establish programmatic infrastructure for one-time distribution of funds.
- There is a complex pipeline of technical assistance necessary to support different aspects of applying for and implementing resources. There is a need to support communication and collaboration among these players for coordinated backend support.
- Program eligibility requirements can be limiting. For example, some financing is designed in a way that excludes beginning and underserved farmers and certain finance and grant programs exclude undocumented applicants.
 - Only three of the more than 50 resources include individual farmers as eligible applicants.
- Very few opportunities for those who can't use debt financing to acquire land.
- Resources to sustain access beyond land transfer and acquisition are minimal.
- Tax structures do not favor proactive succession planning. More support for farmer retirement and transitioning land are needed.

A member noted that some farmers prefer leasing versus ownership. It is therefore also important to consider forms of secure land tenure other than via ownership, such as through land trusts or cooperatives.

Members are also interested to explore opportunities related to tax mechanisms that can be employed to facilitate land transfer, farmer retirement planning without having land ownership, and succession and transition planning. Initial ideas put forward include:

- Eliminate extra fees and processes where possible, especially in the first ten years of ownership. Note: this raises a concern about the purpose of agricultural land purchases and the importance of vetting buyers.
- Align tax incentives with farming incomes. Possibly follow an inverse benefit model, where smaller farm businesses are afforded greater tax breaks.
- Expand the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Land Contract Guarantee program in California and offer better documentation and support for sellers.
- Offer reverse amortization with balanced or limited interest payments, to allow landowners to first pay down their principal and build equity sooner.
- Change tax laws so that a farmer can sell or transfer land while alive without penalization.
- Proactively plan for farmer retirement and succession planning so the upcoming wave of farmland transfers does not result in more land consolidation.
- Support land trusts to more effectively reach farmers and prioritize equity.

The subcommittee anticipates inviting financial experts to speak to these issues and ideas at a subsequent meeting.

Members further proposed to better understand experiences of historically underserved groups through surveys and interviews. This includes surveying individuals who have successfully or unsuccessfully purchased farmland and have accessed resources through one or more grant/funding programs.

Next Steps and Action Items

The next steps and action items considered during the meeting include:

- Staff to:
 - Gather more information on existing programs that support land transfer .
 - Compile existing data on grant program metrics and outcomes.
 - Research existing applicant surveys and propose a survey and interview approach for subcommittee purposes.
 - Schedule a follow-up subcommittee meeting in September.
- Consider inviting financial experts and those with tax expertise to future meetings to discuss financing and tax-related topics.

Public Comment

None.

General Public Comment

None.

The meeting concluded at 12 p.m.