

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

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.