

# California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Meeting Summary: Feb. 24, 2026

## Meeting Called to Order

Chair Nelson Hawkins provided welcoming remarks and called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. Vice-Chair Emily Burgueno provided welcoming remarks. Facilitator Meagan Wylie welcomed attendees, provided housekeeping remarks, reviewed participation guidelines, and previewed the day's agenda.

## Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by Wylie. Members present:

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

Members absent:

None.

Quorum was established.

## Staff Attendance:

Staff members present:

- Camille Frazier, California Strategic Growth Council
- Sean Kennedy, California Strategic Growth Council
- Tessa Salzman, California Strategic Growth Council
- Caleb Swanson, California Strategic Growth Council
- Meagan Wylie, California State University, Sacramento

\* *Denotes virtual attendance*

## **Action: Approval of Summaries**

Approval of past meeting summaries.

### **Action:**

Chair Hawkins moved to approve the meeting summaries. Member Schwartzman seconded.

### **Task Force Discussion:**

None.

### **Public Comment:**

None.

### **Action:**

Motion passed. (13-0-0).

## **Staff Report**

Staff provided updates:

- Copies of the report have been printed and provided to Task Force members. If members would like additional printed copies, they should reach out to staff.
- Staff developed a draft report summary for Task Force review that will be translated into numerous languages.
- Staff also developed 1–2-page documents summarizing the contents of the report regarding local governments, funding needs, and technical assistance.
- The report and other promotional materials and resources can be accessed on the Task Force’s Google Drive.
- Some members will present to the California Strategic Growth Council at its February 25, 2026 meeting. After the presentation, the Council will consider a resolution thanking the Task Force for its work and concluding and withdrawing Task Force members’ appointments to the Task Force.
- After members’ appointments are concluded, staff will create an email group of Task Force members for future communication.
- A short, anonymous evaluation survey will be circulated to Task Force members requesting their feedback and reflections on their experiences on the Task Force. This survey will help staff develop guidance for the administration of future, similar state bodies.
- The Governor’s proposed 2026-2027 budget includes an allocation of just under \$5 million from the 2024 Climate Bond (Prop 4) to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for the “Improve Land Access and Tenure for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers or Tribal Producers” program. If this allocation remains in the final budget, SGC staff will work with DOC to decide next steps.

- Regarding the \$1 million in reserved funds, staff have reviewed the Task Force’s final report to identify relevant areas of need. Staff plan to host public engagement opportunities to inform the distribution of these reserved funds, and Task Force members will be made aware of these engagement opportunities as members of the public.

Task Force members provided feedback:

- A member requested that the basket icon used in the report for section 1 be changed to an acorn.
- Members requested that 1–2-page summaries be developed for Tribal communities and conservation-focused institutions, including land trusts, open space organizations, and the University of California Natural Reserve System.
- In addition to translating the report summaries into Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Hmong, and Iu Mien, members requested translating these materials into Punjabi.
- Members suggested reaching out to site visit and engagement sessions hosts to inquire if they would like hard copies of the report or other Task Force materials.
- Members noted the importance of consulting and having government-to-government engagement with Tribal nations regarding the distribution of reserved funds.

Members also shared the following announcements:

- Vice-Chair Burgueno has developed a land stewardship and nursery training, mirrored on a similar program administered by the Intertribal Agriculture Council but intentionally developed to serve her community and the 18 Tribal nations in San Diego County. The first session was recently held and was successful. One session will be held per season.
- Member de Barraicua shared that she presented the Task Force’s work at an EcoFarm conference session and that it was a well-attended and successful session.
- Member Robinson emphasized the success of the EcoFarm session and that she had another successful presentation about the Task Force’s work at the Community Alliance with Family Farmer’s Small Farms Conference. She encouraged Task Force members to take opportunities to present and share the Task Force’s report.
- Member Rittenhouse shared that the Task Force’s report was timely given the distribution of 2025 Proposition 4 Climate Bond funding. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has received funding to administer relevant grant programs, including a Tribal Food Sovereignty and Urban Agriculture grant program. Additionally, conversations about the Task Force’s report and work will continue in CDFA’s BIPOC and Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committees.
- Member de Barraicua shared that she is working with an assemblymember to author legislation around recommendation 3.2.a.

**Public Comment:**

- Zion Taddese expressed the need for policy change to increase ownership of California agricultural land by Black producers.
- Mireya Gomez-Contreras expressed gratitude to the Task Force for its work and encouraged the development of a video summary of the report in spoken languages of

Indigenous people in Mexico.

## Reflections and Next Steps

Meagan Wylie gave a brief overview of the Task Force's accomplishments during its process, including 13 quarterly Task Force meetings across California, 33 subcommittee meetings, 15 working groups, the final report, a statewide survey, 20 site visits, numerous Tribal and community engagement sessions, and more.

The group then split into four groups (three in-person, one online) to discuss the following questions:

1. **Looking Back** | Reflect on your collective work over the past two years. How has serving on the Task Force shaped or shifted your understanding of agricultural land equity in California?
2. **What Matters Most** | What do you see as the most important insight, principle, or takeaway from the Task Force's work that should carry forward?
3. **Looking Ahead** | What opportunities do you see for continued collaboration (formal or informal) to advance the recommendations and agricultural land equity beyond Report submission? What role might you or your organization play?

The group later reconvened to share out key takeaways from the group discussions:

- It is important to shift from a problem narrative to a solution narrative.
- Collaboration between Tribal communities and farming communities is valuable and necessary. Trust needs to be developed, and relationships need to be fostered and maintained between these communities.
- Collaboration between organizations is key to push the Task Force's work forward.
- Many folks that the Task Force hopes to serve are already farming and engaged with the land but do not own land or have sovereignty on the land. It is important to shift the resulting power dynamics.
- Advancing land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards is controversial but important.
- Guidelines should be developed that can help individuals implement the recommendations in the Task Force's report.
- Building coalitions to champion specific recommendations or ideas can maintain momentum established by the Task Force.
- Reserved funds should be leveraged to support those the Task Force engaged.

### Public Comment:

- Zion Taddese emphasized the importance of funding and policy change to advance the work of the task Force.
- Mireya Gomez-Contreras expressed how land is key to healing and that policy is not enough. "Wins on the ground" are necessary. She expressed hope for a food hub

coalition and that coordination and leadership is imperative. She expressed that land was the first resource, that California's diversity is a strength, and that arts and culture should be integrated in advancing the Task Force's work.

- John Huang expressed gratitude to the Task Force and the need for technical assistance.
- Adam X expressed the importance of coalition, communication, and defense. Adam expressed that recommendations without funding is not valuable and urged the Task Force to organize around a legislative and funding structure. He also encouraged the Task Force to create a shared narrative and legal posture.
- Stephanie Cain shared an opportunity for local government support for infrastructure funding for urban farming due to the implementation of an organics recycling mandate.
- Jamie Fanous expressed gratitude to the Task Force, encouraged time for rest and celebration, and shared her intent to support organizing around the Task Force's work.
- Luz Cordova encouraged the public to carefully read the report and expressed gratitude to the Task Force for its work, noting that many of the issues she hears about in her work are addressed by the Task Force's report.

Meagan Wylie recapped next steps. Staff and Task Force members provided reflecting remarks.

## **Meeting Adjourned**

Chair Hawkins and Vice Chair Burgueno provided closing comments and adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.