

TRIBAL FOCUS GROUP: KEY TAKEAWAYS

JUNE 2ND 2025

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL LAND EQUITY TASK FORCE (ALETF)



- Participants included seven Tribal members from diverse regions and affiliations.
- All respondents stated they represented groups geographically located in lands Indigenous to the lands and/or territories of current day California



Generally speaking, participants characterized the current state of land access in California, as it pertains to Indigenous and Native American community members’ ability to access land, implement cultural practices and ceremonies, as:

- 2/4 insufficient land access and their community faces major barriers
- ¼ insufficient land access and their community faces some barriers
- ¼ neutral
- 0 participants stated here that there is sufficient land access and their community faces some or major barriers

Key Barriers Identified

Land donations often come with conditions (e.g., conservation easements) that limit traditional practices and do not acknowledge Tribal sovereignty.

Participant Recommendations

Return land to Tribes and Native American communities without restrictions; enable full cultural and sovereign use

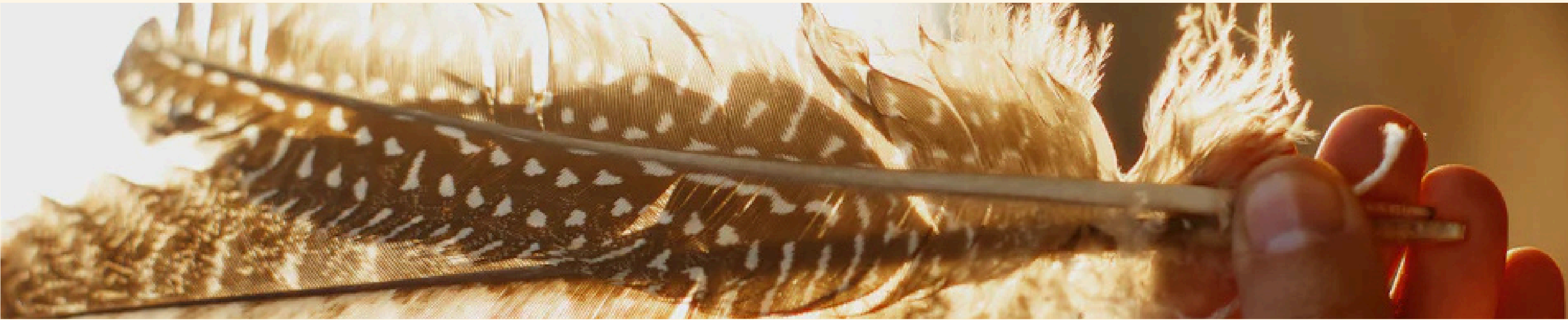
Related ALETF Recommendations

Return ancestral lands to California Tribal Nations

Non-federally recognized Tribes are systematically denied many state and federal supports, this impacts access to programs, land, and funding.

Create a state recognition process for California Tribes to access programs, resources and protections.

Recognize and remove barriers to sovereignty for California Tribal Nations





Key Barriers Identified

Native people are harassed by law enforcement when practicing traditions on public land, sometime interrupted or questioned by the general public, disrupting ceremony. Elders, urban folks and displaced Native people struggle with travel distances to sacred or ancestral lands.

Participant Recomendations

Include clear policy language that affirms Indigenous practices, foodways, ceremonial access, and land stewardship. Prioritize Native access to public lands and ensure protection of these practices by law enforcement, landowners, and the public. Tribes must be engaged as true partners in land and policy decisions.

Related ALETF Recomendations

Recognize and remove barriers to sovereignty for California Tribal Nations

Costs of liability (related to land access for ceremony, tending etc.) raise concerns about who is legally liable for land use and/or related hazard mitigation- this hinders the feasibility of access and ownership (due to high risk or high mitigation costs).

Fund trusted Tribal TA providers and ensure Native communities can access legal and environmental expertise to safely access land without undue legal or financial risk.

Recognize and remove barriers to sovereignty for California Tribal Nations
Increase fair access to public funding for farmers / land stewards who want to purchase land. Increase fair access to public funding for farmers / land stewards who want to purchase land



Next Steps

- These notes were shared with participants who provided comments and edits
- UC ANR researchers will share notes from five sets of focus groups with the ALETF
- ALETF is working with partners to integrate these insights into recommendations for equitable land policy, ensuring Tribal voices shape state frameworks for land access.