

ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING ACT SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL (EFA SAP) CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MEETING AGENDA

April 29, 2021

9 AM to 3 PM

REMOTE ACCESS

Webinar information

Registration URL: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3876989463756254987>

Webinar ID 700-934-771

Presentation materials will be posted at the following link prior to the meeting:

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/meetings_presentations.html

Topic	Presenter	Action Level
1. Chair and Member Introductions	Chair Dlott	Informational Item
		Action Item
2. Minutes	Chair Dlott	Requires EFA SAP Approval

Invited Panelist

Kate Scow, PhD. UC Davis

3. Expert Scientific Panel on Developing a Below-ground Biodiversity Metric

Margaret Smither-Kopperl, Ph.D.
USDA-NRCS Lockeford Plant
Materials Center

Informational Item

Howard Ferris, PhD. UC Davis

Attempt to understand if there is adequate scientific information to establish a below-ground biodiversity metric. An expert panel of scientists will provide insight to the Science Panel Members and public. This effort is part of a larger statewide effort to recognize and enhance biodiversity efforts in California.

The meeting complies with Bagley Keene requirements and the Governors Executive Orders on Covid-19 which allows for remote participation and voting at public meetings.

Questions regarding this public meeting can be directed to Dr. Amrith Gunasekara at (916) 654-0433 or CDFA.OEFI@cdfa.ca.gov
More information at: <http://cdfa.ca.gov/Meetings.html> and http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/EnvironmentalStewardship/Meetings_Presentations.html

Invited Panelist

- | | | |
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| 4. Expert Scientific Panel on Developing an Above-ground Biodiversity Metric | Jesse Kay Cruz, Xerces Society | Information Item |
| | Elizabeth Porzig, Point Blue | |
| | Lora Morandin, Pollinator Partnership Canada | |

Attempt to understand if there is adequate scientific information to establish an above-ground biodiversity metric. An expert panel of scientists will provide insight to the Science Panel Members and public. This effort is part of a larger statewide effort to recognize and enhance biodiversity efforts in California.

Action Item

- | | | |
|---|------------|--|
| 5. Draft Request for Proposals for the Climate Smart Agriculture Planning Program | CDFA Staff | Requires EFA SAP Approval to Move Planning Program Draft Request for Proposals for 30-day Public Comment |
|---|------------|--|

The Science Panel, at the request of several stakeholders in the California agricultural community in 2020, has in a previous public meeting moved a motion to develop and incentive program under the CDFA Climate Smart Agriculture umbrella to incentivize on-farm planning. On-farm plans are beneficial for climate change and environmental mitigation and adaptation efforts. For this agenda item, plans are defined as a comprehensive document that sets forth goals and recommends strategies to achieve them. This agenda item involved CDFA staff presenting to the Science Panel a proposed Draft Request for Proposals which will then be available for 30-day public comment following the Science Panel meeting. Any future funding to any Climate Smart Agriculture program in the Office of Environmental Farming Innovation will then also fund the Planning Program.

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| 6. State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) | SWEEP Team, CDFA | Information Item |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWEEP Ad Hoc Sub-Advisory Group Update and Summary Report • Questions from EFA SAP members for Facilitator and SWEEP Team • Comments to EFA SAP members from Ad Hoc Sub-Advisory Group members | Austin McInerney, Consensus and Collaboration Program
CSU, Sacramento | |
| | Members of the Ad Hoc Sub-Advisory Group | |

The Science Panel, in response to stakeholder requests in 2020, formed an Ad Hoc Sub-Advisory Group to develop recommendations around several questions to evaluate the SWEEP program and determine how the program can be improved further to provide efficient irrigation services to farmers to mitigate and adapt to climate

The meeting complies with Bagley Keene requirements and the Governors Executive Orders on Covid-19 which allows for remote participation and voting at public meetings.

Questions regarding this public meeting can be directed to Dr. Amrith Gunasekara at (916) 654-0433 or CDFA.OEFl@cdfa.ca.gov
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change impacts. The 41 member Ad Hoc Sub-Advisory Group has met January through March 2021 and developed a report. A summary of that report will be presented to the Science Panel members for Agenda Item 6 by the CDFA SWEEP Team. The CDFA SWEEP Team will be moving the report for a 30-day public comment period following the meeting for further public input. A brief update on the SWEEP program will also be provided as part of this agenda item.

7. Healthy Soils Program (HSP)

Healthy Soils Team, CDFA

Informational Item

- Program Updates

8. Technical Assistance Program

Technical Assistance Team, CDFA

Informational Item

- Program Updates

9. Public Comments

Chair Dlott

Informational Item

10. Next Meeting

Chair Dlott

Informational Item

EFA SAP MEMBERSHIP

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/>

Jeff Dlott, PhD, SureHarvest, Member and Chairperson

Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD, Member and Vice Chairperson

Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch, Member

Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm, Member

Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch, Member

Keali'i Bright, California Department of Conservation, Member

Amanda Hansen, California Natural Resources Agency, Member

Scott Couch, State Water Resources Control Board, CalEPA, Member

Michelle Buffington, PhD, California Air Resources Board, CalEPA, Member

Greg Norris, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services, Subject Matter Expert

Doug Parker, PhD, Subject Matter Expert

The meeting complies with Bagley Keene requirements and the Governors Executive Orders on Covid-19 which allows for remote participation and voting at public meetings.

Questions regarding this public meeting can be directed to Dr. Amrith Gunasekara at (916) 654-0433 or CDFA.OEFI@cdfa.ca.gov
More information at: <http://cdfa.ca.gov/Meetings.html> and http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/EnvironmentalStewardship/Meetings_Presentations.html

AGENDA ITEM 1

AGENDA ITEM 2

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING ACT SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL**

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Remotely Hosted to Accommodate Covid-19 Safety Measures

January 14, 2021

9 AM to 3 PM

Remote Access

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/efasap/meetings_presentations.html

MEETING MINUTES

Panel Member in Attendance

Jeff Dlott, SureHarvest (Chair and Member)
Vicky Dawley, Tehama RCD (Member)
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm (Member)
Michelle Buffington, PhD. CalEPA, ARB (Member)
Scott Couch, CalEPA, State Water Board, (Member)
Don Cameron, Terranova Ranch (Member)
Leonard Diggs, Pie Ranch (Member)
Greg Norris, USDA NRCS (Subject Matter Expert)
Doug Parker, PhD. UC ANR (Subject Matter Expert)

State Agency Staff and Presenters

Scott Weeks, CDFA
Joyce Mansfield, CDFA
Steph Jamis, MSc, CDFA
Guihua Chen, PhD, CDFA
Geetika Joshi, PhD, CDFA
Carolyn Cook, M.Sc., CDFA
Amrith Gunasekara, PhD, CDFA

AGENDA ITEMS 1 and 2 – Introduction and Minutes

The public meeting of the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel began at 9:03 am. Chair Dlott introduced the Science Panel members. He accommodated comments and suggestions on the minutes by Panel members. No comments or suggestion were provided. Member Cameron introduced a motion to move the minutes. Member Buffington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously without opposition.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Selection of Vice Chairperson

Chair Dlott introduced the agenda item. Dr. Gunasekara provided an overview of the by-laws and the need to fill the Vice Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson according to the bylaws “shall serve as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson”.

Member Redmond introduced a motion to appoint Member Dawley as Vice Chairperson. The motion was seconded by Member Cameron. The motion passed unanimously with any oppositions, and Member Redmond was appointed for a three-year term of Vice Chairperson.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Panel on Regenerative Agriculture

Three panelists introduced by chair Dlott as part of an invited panel of learning more about Regenerative Agriculture. The panelists were Wendy Miller from TomKat Ranch, David Stuart, PhD, from Food & Nutrient Impact, LLC, and Cynthia A. Daley, PhD, from California State University Chico.

Wendy Miller at TomKat Ranch spoke about the regenerative lab experience at TomKat Ranch. She discussed the 6 core principles and co-benefits of regenerative agriculture such as social justice, improving conditions for farm workers, increase biodiversity, climate stability, water cycle function, improved income. Included case studies to showcase the points.

Dr. Stuart who received his advanced degree from UC Berkeley spoke about specific types of farming systems with cacao trees with overstory/canopy systems which is very similar to rainforest systems and helps with carbon capture. He noted the cacao industry had many challenges, including poverty for farmers and child labor which became a driver for change in the chocolate industry toward environmental sustainability. Since then the discussion and efforts have progressed further into regenerative agriculture. Dr. Stuart discussed consumer motivations, education and outreach efforts.

Dr. Daly from CSU Chico is the Director of the Center for Regenerative Agriculture. She presented examples of practices and new teaching courses at CSU, Chico on regenerative agriculture.

The Science Panel members were provided an opportunity during and at the end of the presentation to ask questions. The panel members asked several questions and responses were provided by the panel members.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Update on Proposed Incentives for Climate Smart Agriculture Planning Activities

This agenda item was presented by Ms. Jamis from the CDFA OEFI SWEEP team. Following the presentation several members had questions about the activities including what the potential funding source might be. Dr. Gunasekara noted that funding for this effort will become available when funding is made available for any one of the current CSA programs under OEFI. The amount to be allocated from the CSA program funding to this effort will be determined by the Secretary of CDFA.

AGENDA ITEM 6 –SWEEP Program Updates

A presentation on SWEEP program updates was provided by Mr. Weeks from the CDFA OEFI SWEEP team. Members asked several questions including the amount of funds allocated for the program in the Governor's proposed January budget. The CDFA team responded by noting that the total proposed amount for SWEEP was \$40 million. Another question from a member was the availability of SWEEP acres by county. The CDFA OEFI SWEEP team responded that obtaining that information would be possible for presentation at a future EFA SAP meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7 - SWEEP 2016 Round 1 Project Outcomes

A presentation to the members on this agenda item was made by Dr. Olivier Jerphagnon from AgMonitor, previously known as Powwow. Several members asked questions of Dr. Jerphagnon who responded to each member's question.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - Healthy Soils Program Updates

A presentation on the Healthy Soils Program Presented by Dr. Joshi. Members asked several questions including if PM 2.5 reduction from practices are primarily due to reduced diesel use. Dr. Joshi responded that is the case for No-Till and for Whole Orchard Recycling, PM 2.5 is eliminated

since there is no burning of the woody material.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Technical Assistance Program Updates

An update presentation on this agenda item was presented by Ms. Cook. Member asked several question including if it is possible to do before and after comparisons of number of applications from SDFRs to determine if the applications increased as a result of technical assistance. Ms. Cook responded that this analysis is possible. Another question from a member was an inquiry on how an SDFR determined on an application. Ms. Cook responded that it is and it is a self-identification system with categories taken from the Farmer Equity Act.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Public Comments

Chair Dlott and Joyce Mansfield facilitated public comments.

Public comment was made by several public participants. Questions included if crop carbon enrichment qualifies as a regenerative practice, when the next round of funding for the Healthy Soils Program will be available, if the technical assistance providers funded through CDFA OEFI CSA were available to non-grantees of HSP/SWEEP/AMMP grants, if there was a way to incentivize cover crops beyond grants, will funding be available for farmers for the planning program, if the Science Panel will consider a deeper soil carbon sample at 30 cm as new research shows this is important and may be vulnerable to future warming and what other things in the State Legislature would the Science Panel like to see passed including potential loan guarantees for and educational funding. Chair Dlott and CDFA team members responded to some of the questions.

A public comment was made to suggest planning grant funds should go to technical assistance providers as they have good credentials to help farmers and ranchers with plans.

There was also a recommendation for a future Science Panel discussion. Recent budget discussion in the state involved shifting AMMP and DDRDP CSA funding in Governor's proposed January budget to a Climate Catalyst Fund (revolving loan program). The proposal was to hear from iBank on how the loan program would work and fit into CDFA CSA activities.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – Next meeting and Location

April 15, 2021, remotely conducted to accommodate Covid-19 safety measures.

Chair Dlott introduced the motion to adjourn the meeting which was moved by Member Dawley. The motion was seconded by Member Diggs. Panel members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2.33 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D.
Liaison to the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM 4

AGENDA ITEM 5

2021 Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program



Background

This program will fund the development of various types of agricultural conservation activity plans (CAPs) related to CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) programs. CSA addresses risks that climate change poses to agriculture.

The funded plans will promote CSA efforts which will help to mitigate GHG emissions, adapt to climate change impacts and promote environmental and agricultural sustainability.

Definitions

- A plan is defined as a comprehensive document that sets forth goals and recommends strategies to achieve them
- An agricultural operation is defined as row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, and livestock and livestock product operations

Funding & Duration

- The maximum award amount is \$250,000 per applicant
- The maximum cost reimbursed is \$20,000 per agricultural operation
- Multiple plans may be used to account for the maximum award amount per agricultural operation
- University of California (UC) and California State Universities (CSU) applicants applying for the program may claim the established indirect cost rate with CDFA
- All other eligible organizations applying may claim an indirect cost rate of 20% of total direct costs
- Matching funds are not required but encouraged
- The duration of the grant agreement is 18 months from the date of execution

Eligibility

- This program is designed to provide funding to eligible entities in California to assist California farmers and ranchers in developing plans for on-farm use. The following entities in collaboration with farmers or ranchers on private or recognized Native American Indian Tribal lands are eligible to apply:
 - Technical Service Providers (TSPs) registered by [USDA NRCS](#)
 - Not-for-profit entities including agricultural industry not-for-profit entities
 - Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)
 - Federal and University Experiment Stations
 - University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension
 - Public universities such as University of California, California State University and community colleges
 - Agricultural cooperatives

Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) Eligible for CDFA Funding

- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 102)
- Nutrient Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 104)
- Grazing Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 110)
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 114)
- Soil Health Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 116)
- Irrigation Water Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 118)
- Agricultural Energy Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 128)
- Agricultural Energy Design Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 136)
- Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (USDA NRCS CAP 138)
- Pollinator Habitat Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 146)
- IPM Herbicide Resistance Weed Conservation Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 154)
- Carbon Farm Plans

Tentative Timeline

Activity	Tentative Dates*
Application Period Begins	TBD
Applications Due	TBD
Administrative Review Period	TBD
Technical Review Period	TBD
Anticipated Date of Finalized Contracts and When Work Can Start	TBD
Length of Contract	18 months

*Dates are subject to change depending on allocation of funds to CDFA for the Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program



2021 CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE PLANNING GRANTS PROGRAM



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Draft Request for Proposals

Release date: TBD

Applications due: TBD

Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento CA, 95814

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	2
FUNDING & DURATION.....	2
ELIGIBILITY	2
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.....	3
PROGRAM TIMELINE	5
HOW TO APPLY	5
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	5
REVIEW PROCESS	5
GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION	8
APPENDIX A.....	10

BACKGROUND

The Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants program will fund the development of various types of agricultural conservation activity plans (CAP) related to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) programs and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation programs. CSA addresses risks that climate change poses to agriculture. The funded plans will promote CSA efforts which will help to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, adapt to climate change impacts and promote environmental and agricultural sustainability.

- For the purpose of this program, a plan is defined as a comprehensive document that sets forth goals and recommends strategies to achieve them.
- For the purpose of this program, an agricultural operation is defined as row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, and livestock and livestock product operations.

FUNDING & DURATION

- The maximum award amount is \$250,000 per applicant.
- The maximum cost reimbursed is \$20,000 per agricultural operation.
- Multiple plans may be used to account for the maximum award amount per agricultural operation.
- University of California (UC) and California State Universities (CSU) applicants applying for Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants may claim the established indirect cost rate with CDFA.
- All other eligible organizations applying for Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants may claim an indirect cost rate of 20% of total direct costs.
- Matching funds are not required but encouraged.

Grant funds may not be expended prior to execution of the grant agreements for awarded projects, or after the completion of the grant agreement term.

The duration of the grant agreement is 18 months from the date of execution.

CDFA may offer an award different than the amount requested.

ELIGIBILITY

The Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants program is designed to provide funding to eligible entities in California to assist California farmers and ranchers in developing plans for on-farm use. The following entities are eligible to apply for the 2021 Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants in collaboration with farmers or ranchers on private or recognized Native American Indian Tribal lands:

- Technical Service Providers (TSPs) registered by [USDA NRCS](#)
- Not-for-profit entities including agricultural industry not-for-profit entities
- Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)
- Federal and University Experiment Stations
- University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension
- Public universities such as University of California, California State University and community colleges
- Agricultural cooperatives

Entities applying for Conservation Agriculture CAP Grants must collaborate with farmers and ranchers that need assistance with Conservation Agriculture planning activities. Applicants must have demonstrated technical expertise in the implementation of agricultural practices and technologies supported through USDA NRCS programs or CDFA CSA programs.

Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) Eligible for CDFA Funding

Plans eligible to receive funding through this program include:

- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 102)
- Nutrient Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 104)
- Grazing Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 110)
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 114)
- Soil Health Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 116)
- Irrigation Water Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 118)
- Agricultural Energy Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 128)
- Agricultural Energy Design Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 136)
- Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (USDA NRCS CAP 138)
- Pollinator Habitat Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 146)
- IPM Herbicide Resistance Weed Conservation Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 154)
- Carbon Farm Plans

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Entities must submit a proposal through the CDFA electronic application platform on (X link to be inserted here).

The application submission period will be on a rolling first-come-first-served basis, starting (date TBD) and continuing through (date TBD) or until available funds are expended, whichever is earlier.

- Cooperator organizations may submit one application for a maximum award amount of \$250,000 to conduct multiple conservation agriculture plans in collaboration with agricultural operations.
- Application can have multiple collaborators as part of the application.

- Applicants may not be lead applicant on more than one application to distribute the funds widely.
- Agricultural operations do not need to be identified when applying.
- An estimate of the number of agricultural organizations and number of plans will need to be provided at time of application.
- Prioritized funding may be provided to Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant applicants who use 25% of funds to provide planning assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers¹ (SDFRs) and farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less.
- The actual number of agricultural organizations assisted and number of plans completed will be required at time of reporting and invoicing.
- This is a reimbursement program with cost incurred and invoices submitted to CDFA for reimbursement.
- 25% advanced payments will be provided with appropriate justification.
- 10% of the funds will be withheld until project completion, submission of all required reports and verification including prioritization of 25% of requested funds for SDFRs.
- Copies of finalized and farmer-approved Conservation Agriculture Plans will be provided to CDFA as part of project verification.

The development of Conservation Agriculture Plans will be incentivized based on standard payment rates provided in [Appendix A](#). Itemized budgets in a format different from CDFA provided template is not allowable.

At least 25% of the grant funds must be used to provide planning assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers¹. Grant recipients must prioritize assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs), and farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less. Additionally, grant recipients may be required to prioritize assistance to additional groups to comply with requirements associated with specific funding sources, such as AB 1550 Priority Populations².

¹ "Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following: (1) African Americans (2) Native American Indians (3) Alaskan Natives (4) Hispanics (5) Asian Americans (6) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

² AB 1550 Priority Populations as applicable to California Climate Investments include Disadvantaged Communities identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) as the top 25% most impacted census tracts in [CalEnviroScreen 3.0](#), and Low-income Communities and Households, defined as the census tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80% of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) [2016 State Income Limits](#). For more information and mapping tool, visit <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm>.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Tentative Dates*
Application period begins	TBD
Applications due	TBD
Administrative review period	TBD
Technical review period	TBD
Anticipated date of finalized contracts and when work can start	TBD
Length of Contract	18 months

*Dates are subject to change depending on allocation of funds to CDFA for the Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program.

HOW TO APPLY

The 2021 Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program application must be submitted online through the CDFA electronic application submission platform [X link to be inserted]. The application materials and a link to application portal can be found at [X link to new webpage to be inserted].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

TBD and will include information on frequency/format of Q/A rounds depending on workshops.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed using a two-stage process:

I. Administrative Review

The purpose of the administrative review is to determine whether grant application requirements are met. Grant applications disqualified as a result of the administrative or financial review may be appealed.

During the administrative review, the following will result in the automatic disqualification of a grant application:

- One or more unanswered questions necessary for the administrative or technical review;
- Missing, blank, unreadable, or corrupt content;
- Unusable or unreadable attachments;
- Applications that do not comply with Eligibility or meet Program Requirements;
- Requests for more than the maximum award amount.

APPEAL RIGHTS: Any disqualification taken during the administrative review for the preceding reasons may be appealed to CDFA's Office of Hearings and Appeals Office within 10 days of receiving a notice of disqualification from CDFA. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party name on the grant application. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the CDFA decision being challenged. The submissions must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be denied.

II. Technical Review

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of technical reviewers on a first-come-first-served basis. Proposals will be evaluated based on the Minimum Qualifications Criteria provided on page 7. Proposals meeting the minimum qualifications will be selected for funding based on the order they were submitted and priority considerations.

Minimum Qualifications Criteria

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Identifies the number of agricultural operations to be assisted and number of plans.
- Identifies the agricultural operations needing plan(s).
- Number of SDFRs that the entity will be planning to assist.

2. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ)

- Does the SOQ clearly identify the capacity of the lead applicant organization to serve as an eligible entity for assisting farmers and ranchers establish a plan?
- Has the applicant appropriately explained how the education, work history, and technical expertise of key personnel makes them qualified for this role in developing the specific plan?
 - Is the applicant a TSP registered with the USDA-NRCS?
 - Do the resumes of individuals listed in the proposal align well with relevant expertise for the selected plan?
 - Did the applicant provide relevant certificates for trainings mentioned in the resume?
 - Has the applicant previously assisted in developing such plans for agricultural operations and provided examples?
 - Did the applicant provide relevant transcripts for the education and coursework mentioned in the resume?

In addition to criteria listed above, CDFA will prioritize funding the following:

- Proposals that will provide at least 25% of all Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs).
- Proposals that will prioritize assistance to additional groups to comply with requirements associated with specific funding sources, such as AB 1550 Priority Populations.

Notification and Feedback

All applicants will be notified regarding the status of their grant applications. Successful applicants will receive specific instructions regarding the award process, including information on invoicing and reporting requirements. Applicants not selected for funding will receive feedback regarding their applications within 60 days after receiving notification.

CDFA will post a list of received proposals on the Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program website [X link to be inserted] the applications it has received at least 10 days before awarding grant funds. After projects are selected and all funds are encumbered, CDFA will post an updated list within 90 days that identifies status of awarded project applications.

GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

Grant Agreement

Applicants with projects selected for award of funds will receive a Grant Agreement package with specific instructions regarding award requirements including information on project implementation and payment process. Once a Grant Agreement is executed, grant recipients can begin implementation of the project. Grant recipients are responsible for the overall management of their awarded project to ensure all project activities are completed no later than 18 months after execution of the grant agreement.

Payment Process

CDFA will provide grant recipients with the necessary grant award and invoicing documents. Funds will be allocated on a reimbursement basis consistent with payment rates listed in Appendix A. Invoices must be submitted quarterly and include all supporting financial documentation to substantiate expenses. CDFA will withhold 10% from the total grant award until the completed plan is submitted to ensure grant recipients meet all program requirements. Invoicing and project completion must be within the grant agreement duration.

Reporting

Progress Report

Grant recipients must submit a detailed semi-annual report to CDFA identifying tasks and activities accomplished in the reporting period. CDFA will provide a reporting template and schedule to grant recipients. Progress Reports must include, at a minimum:

- Total number of agricultural operations assisted, including name and contact information.
- Information of number of plans completed.
- Number of individuals assisted who belong to groups such as SDFRs and/or farms and ranches 500 acres or less.
- Description of plan development activities completed.

For auditing purposes, recipients are required to maintain detailed Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant records on-site.

Final Report

Grant recipients must submit a final report detailing all completed tasks consistent with the Project Budget. Completed plans must be approved by the farmer or rancher and submitted to CDFA.

Critical Project Review

Grant recipients must agree to a Critical Project Review and audit during the project term to verify project progress as reported in the Progress Report submitted to CDFA, including number of farmers and ranchers assisted. If it is determined by CDFA from the Critical Project Review that at that time the grant recipient is not meeting and is unlikely to meet certain milestones, CDFA has the right to terminate the Grant Agreement pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement. If the grant is terminated and has incurred any costs during the term, the Grantee must return any previously reimbursed funds. Termination may result in forfeiture by the grantee of any funds retained pursuant to 10% retention policy. Critical Project Review may be completed through an auditing process.

APPENDIX A

2021 Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program: Payment Rates

Plan	Type	Requirement(s)	CDFA Payment Rate
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) (NRCS CPS 102)	Revision		\$2,753.63
	With Land Application	≤ 300 acres	\$3,733.35
		> 300 acres	\$5,008.73
	Without Land Application	≤ 300 acres	\$2,255.10
		> 300 acres	\$2,550.75
	Dairy Operation with Land Application	< 300 acres	\$8,546.36
		≥ 300 acres < 700 acres	\$9,740.58
		≥ 700 acres	\$10,816.55
	Livestock Operation with Land Application	< 300 acres	\$6,250.68
		> 300 acres	\$7,785.83
	Non-Dairy Operation with Land Application	< 300 acres	\$6,815.27
		≥ 300 acres < 700 acres	\$8,786.34
		≥ 700 acres	\$10,620.60
Carbon Farm Plans	TBD		
Nutrient Management Plan (NRCS CPS 104)	Element of a CNMP	≤ 100 acres	\$3,010.88
		101-300 acres	\$4,215.23
		> 300 acres	\$5,118.49
	Not part of a CNMP	≤ 100 acres	\$1,806.53
		101-300 acres	\$2,408.70

		> 300 acres	\$3,010.88
Grazing Management Plan (NRCS CPS 110)		101-500 acres	\$2,350.80
		501-1500 acres	\$2,938.50
		1501-5000 acres	\$3,526.20
		> 5000 acres	\$4,113.90
Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) (NRCS CPS 114)	Small-Specialty	< 50 acres	\$1,505.44
	Medium	51-250 acres	\$1,926.96
	Large	> 250 acres	\$3,010.88
Soil Health Management Plan (NRCS CPS 116)	Small Farm		\$1,806.53
	Crops		\$2,408.70
	Organic Crops		\$2,709.79
	Crops and Livestock		\$3,010.88
	Organic Crops and Livestock		\$3,311.96
Irrigation Water Management Plan (NRCS CPS 118)	Conservation Activity Plan		\$2,718.98
	With Pump Test		\$4,272.68
Agricultural Energy Management Plan (NRCS CPS 128)	Small	One Enterprise within an agricultural operation	\$1,803.12
		Two Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$2,798.30
		Three Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$3,241.42
		Four Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$3,946.59
	Medium	One Enterprise within an agricultural operation	\$2,246.24
		Two Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$3,793.48
		Three Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$4,236.60

		Four Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$4,941.77
Agricultural Energy Management Plan (NRCS CPS 128)	Large	One Enterprise within an agricultural operation	\$2,951.40
		Two Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$5,177.09
		Three Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$5,697.89
		Four Enterprises within an agricultural operation	\$6,480.75
Agricultural Energy Design Plan (NRCS CPS 136)	Low Complexity	One Design	\$2,089.18
		2-3 Designs	\$3,242.63
		4-5 Designs	\$4,396.07
		6+ Designs	\$5,549.52
	Medium Complexity	One Design	\$3,160.10
		2-3 Designs	\$4,313.54
		4-5 Designs	\$5,466.99
		6+ Designs	\$6,620.44
	High Complexity	One Design	\$4,231.01
		2-3 Designs	\$5,384.46
		4-5 Designs	\$6,537.91
		6+ Designs	\$7,691.36
Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (NRCS CPS 138)	Crops OR Livestock		\$3,784.32
	Crops AND Livestock		\$4,434.75
Pollinator Habitat Plan (NRCS CPS 146)		Local TSP	\$2,522.21
		No Local TSP	\$3,663.20
IPM Herbicide Resistance	Small-Specialty	≤ 50 acres	\$1,806.53

Weed Conservation Plan (NRCS CPS 154)	Medium	51-250 acres	\$2,348.48
	Large	> 250 acres	\$3,613.05

DRAFT

AGENDA ITEM 6



State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program

Ad Hoc Advisory Group Process & Recommendations

Science Advisory Panel Update
4/29/2021

CDFA Secretary & EFA Science Advisory Panel Received Letter from Stakeholders

- Acknowledged new regulatory, technological, and policy developments.
- Potential future SWEEP funding sources may increase opportunities
- Requested convening a stakeholder advisory group to review and, if necessary, make recommendations for updates to SWEEP.



May 26, 2020

TO: Secretary Karen Ross and the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel

Re: **Request for the EFA SAP to Convene a SWEEP Stakeholder Advisory Group**

Dear Secretary Ross and the Science Advisory Panel Members:

Thank you for the important role you have played in guiding the development of the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) over the past six years. Your expert input to the program has contributed greatly to its success. Many farmers in our respective networks have benefitted from the program and are eager to see the program continue and expanded.

In light of new regulatory, technological, and policy developments, as well as stakeholder feedback, we, the undersigned, are requesting the Science Advisory Panel (SAP) convene a stakeholder advisory group to review and, if necessary, make recommendations for updates to the program. We are making this request now to give stakeholders and the SAP adequate time outside of SWEEP's typical quick-turnaround funding cycles to consider these developments and address the next phase of the program.

Farmers are facing a complex new regulatory environment, from implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) to new requirements from the Bay-Delta Plan and the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) Plan. These changes have made resource management more challenging and complicated, and require the need for both efficient and flexible on-farm water management systems. Concurrently, irrigation technologies are evolving rapidly, creating both exciting new opportunities and the need for more resources for some growers.¹

For the first few years, SWEEP predominately received funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), which required every project to demonstrate quantifiable on-farm greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. This requirement led to the incentivization of micro and drip irrigation systems, and also had the consequence of complicating the implementation of on-farm water efficiency projects that use surface water, portable irrigation pumps, and pressurized water. The current funding source for the program (Proposition 68) and potential future funding sources for the program (e.g. potential bond funds or the General Fund) may not have the same GHG

¹ Management of Agricultural Energy and Water Use with Access to Improved Data. Fresno State Center for Irrigation Technology and Ag H2O. 2017.

Ad Hoc Advisory Group Formed

Process:

- Public call for experts to serve on Ad Hoc Advisory Group
- 42 individuals applied and all were selected to serve
- Neutral facilitation team retained to guide meetings

Framing Questions:

1. SWEEP's ability to help farmers improve water use efficiency. What is working well and what might SWEEP seek to improve? How might SWEEP evolve to help farmers address new resource management challenges?
2. How might SWEEP improve participation by agricultural operations that have historically faced barriers in accessing or utilizing the program?
3. How might promotion and coordination of SWEEP be improved with irrigation districts, groundwater sustainability agencies, and USDA-NRCS?

News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Media Contacts: Steve Lyle (CDFA), 916-654-0462, officeofpublicaffairs@cdfa.ca.gov



Release #20-129

[Print This Release](#)

CDFA SEEKS MEMBERS FOR ON-FARM WATER AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORY GROUP

[Español](#)

SACRAMENTO, September 14, 2020 – The California Department of Food and Agriculture's [Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel \(EFA SAP\)](#) is accepting applications from stakeholders interested in serving on an ad hoc advisory group to provide input about on-farm water and energy efficiency practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The ad hoc advisory group will review the history and accomplishments of the multi-benefit Statewide Water and Energy Enhancement Program (SWEEP) and prepare recommendations for potential updates and adjustments for any future program, including partnerships and alternative funding sources for incentives to growers. As state funding sources are currently unavailable for SWEEP, it is an opportune time to evaluate the history and performance of the program to share results and successes, and to consider new partnerships to continue this important work.

SWEEP was established in 2014 at the height of the most recent severe drought in California's history. The program has since provided over 800 awards to farmers and ranchers to improve irrigation systems with the objective of achieving both water savings and greenhouse gas reductions from pumping and on-farm water distribution. Moving into this next decade, farmers are facing an even more complex regulatory environment related to water use, such as the implementation of the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\)](#). Furthermore, irrigation technologies are evolving rapidly, creating additional opportunities for farmers and the need for more resources and attention.

The advisory group will consist of stakeholders who have diverse expertise in farming, climate smart agricultural practices, California water regulations, agricultural water use efficiency and technologies. Members will be tasked with providing recommendations to address the following questions about SWEEP:

- The program's ability to help farmers improve water use efficiency – what's working well and what might the program seek to improve? How might any future program evolve to help farmers address new resource management challenges?
- How might any future program improve participation by operations that have historically faced barriers in accessing or utilizing the program?
- How might promotion and coordination of a program like SWEEP be improved with irrigation districts, groundwater sustainability agencies, USDA-NRCS and other potential partners?

The Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory panel will approve members of the ad hoc advisory group at its October public meeting. Members are asked to be available to participate in three virtual meetings during the winter of 2020-2021. At each meeting, members will have the opportunity to ask questions of SWEEP program staff and propose and discuss programmatic updates to any future program. The committee's recommendations will be formalized in a report and shared with the public and then the EFA SAP for consideration.

Individuals interested in serving must send a letter of interest and a resume or curriculum vitae to CDFA.OEFI@cdfa.ca.gov by September 30, 2020 at 5 p.m. (PT). Late submissions will not be accepted.

California State University Sacramento

Consensus and Collaboration Program



Austin McNerny
Senior Facilitator/Mediator



Corin Choppin
Assistant Facilitator/Mediator

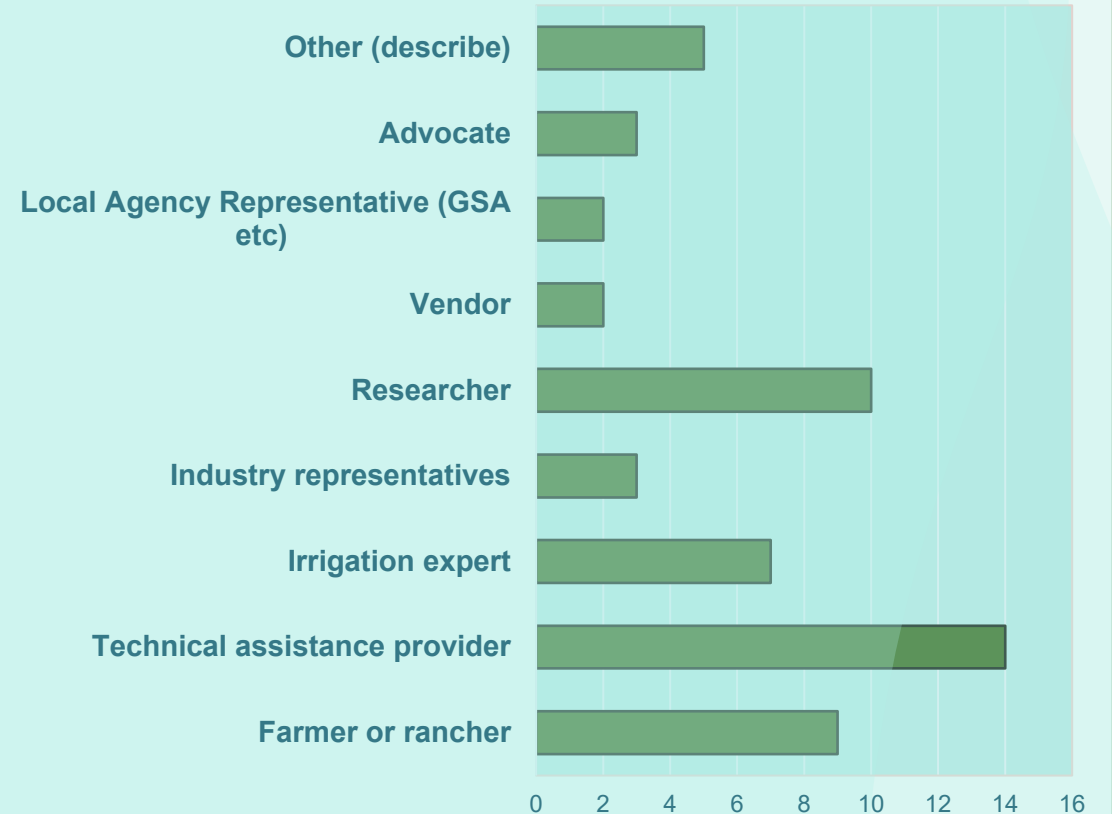
Ad Hoc Advisory Group (AAG)

Recommendation Development Timeline

Meeting 1 – Information Delivery/Exchange	January 28, 2021
Meeting 2 – Recommendations Formed	February 25, 2021
Meeting 3 – Recommendations Finalized	March 25, 2021
Recommendations Presented	April 29th EFA SAP Meeting
Public Comment Period	30 days Following Presentation

AAG Membership Categories

(Members can pick more than one)



Ad Hoc Advisory Group Virtual Meeting Process

Meeting 1 (January 28) – Process Kick-Off & Information Sharing

- Review and adoption of charter
- Background presentation
- Initial review of framing questions
- Identification of data requests

Meeting 2 (February 25) - Preliminary Recommendations Formed

- Presentation on data requests
- Multiple rounds of breakout groups to begin recommendation brainstorming
- Prioritization voting exercise undertaken & completed post meeting
- Volunteer/CDFA Staff review of prioritized recommendations post meeting

Meeting 3 (March 25) - Recommendations Finalized

- Multiple rounds of breakout groups to finalize recommendations
- Level of support survey completed post meeting
- Final Report produced after survey closed

Process complied with Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act



Ad Hoc Advisory Group Participation

- 42 diverse experts in farming, climate smart agricultural practices, California water regulations, agricultural water use efficiency and technologies contributed. One member resigned after first meeting due to time constraints
- 80-90% attendance at all three meetings
- Time allowed for public to speak at all meetings; only one attendee at two meetings
- 15.25 hours total virtual meeting time
- Special thanks to Christine Gemperle, Brian Shobe, Nancy Comstock and Zack Peek for their assistance in developing questions to help clarify and strengthen preliminary prioritized recommendations after 2nd meeting
- 95% member contribution to final level of support survey



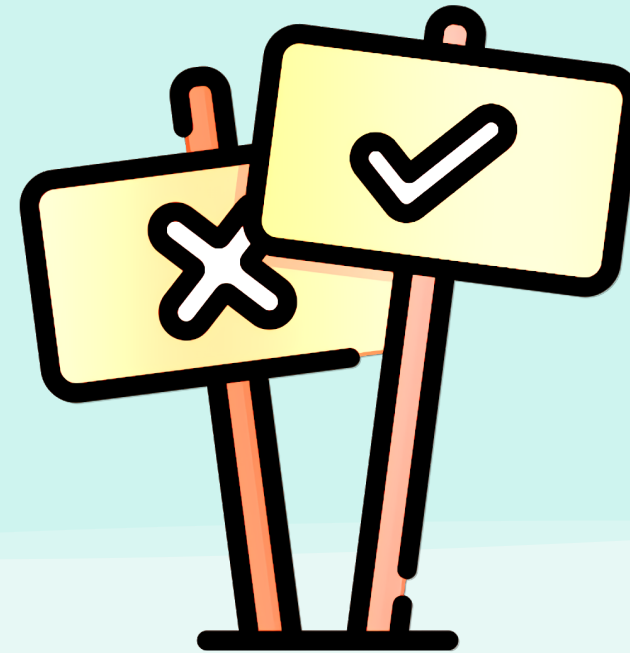
Ad Hoc Advisory Member Process Feedback

- “Overall, this process was well-facilitated and highly productive, especially considering the large number of group members, breadth of initial recommendations, and limited duration of the process.”
- “I would strongly recommend this process and these facilitators for regularly evaluating and updating CDFA's programs every few years to continually improve them and account for changes in relevant science, technology, practices, and policies.”
- “I hate to say because the burden on all, but more time for the process. I also want to say that staff did an excellent job.”
- “Loved it and would like to be on more, or even a smaller committee for some of these topics if they are created.”
- “The process was very open and volunteers’ input was accepted willingly. The staff did not try to sway the outcome. The facilitators moved the process along very effectively.”
- “Again, on the whole, I think this was a worthwhile, informative, and constructive process and look forward to supporting the implementation of the group's recommendations.”

Preview of Recommendations

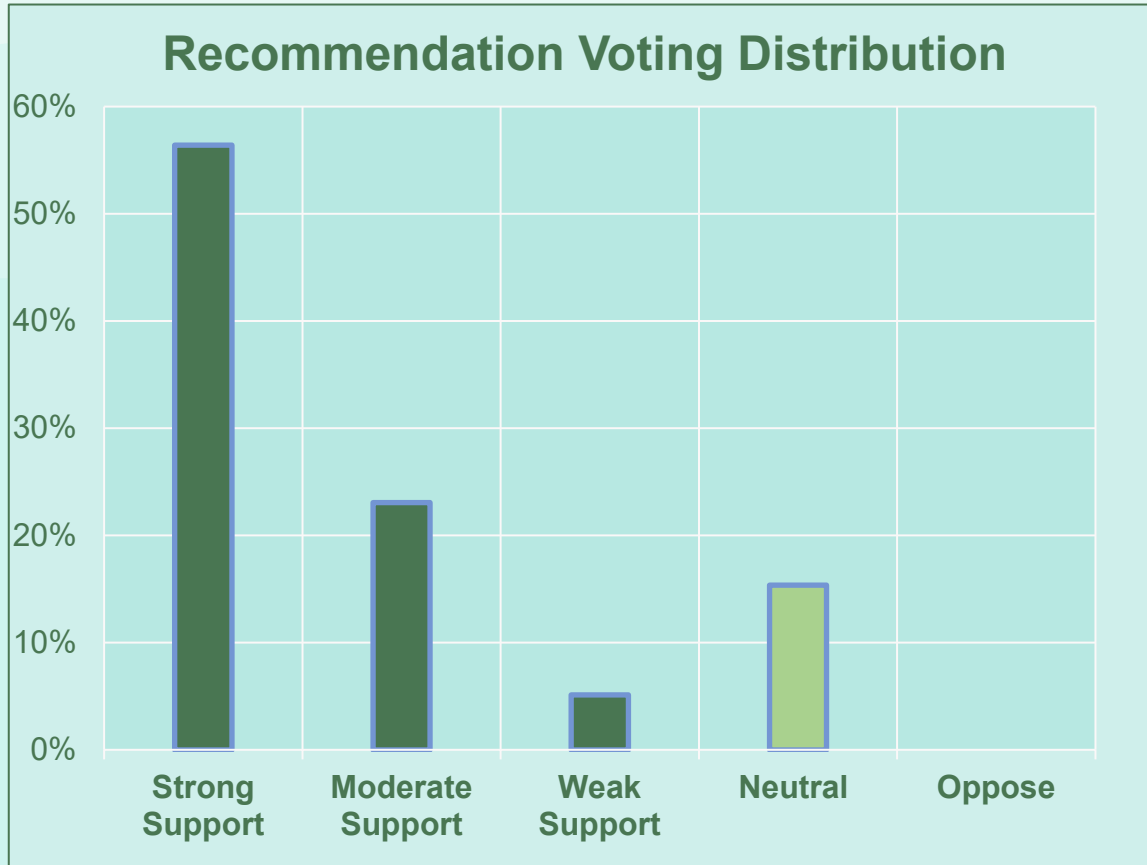
This preview is some of the highest scoring recommendations

48 total recommendations will be included in the report and will include opposing opinions



Question 1 Recommendations

How might SWEEP evolve

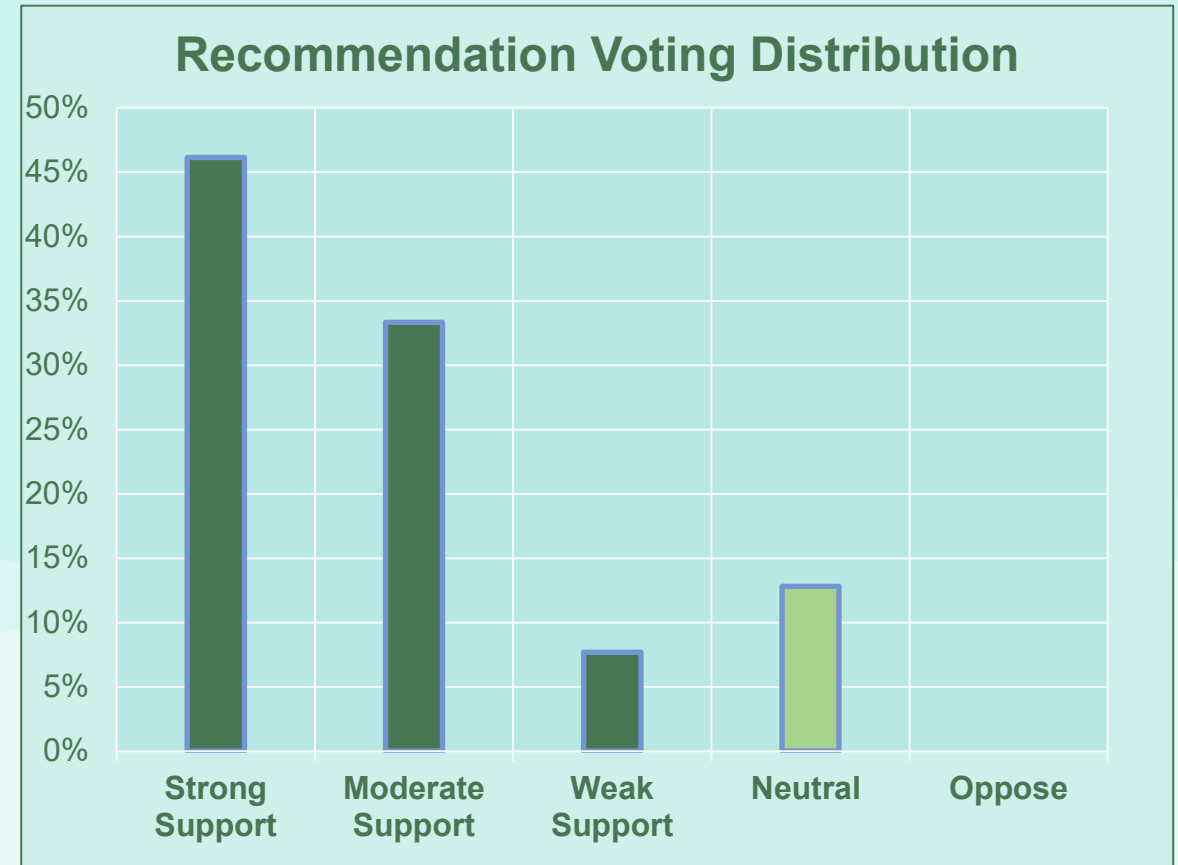


Recommendation: CDFA should allow for farmers to apply for funding for a storage and compensation reservoir so that the farmer can capture the water on the intervals that water is delivered or diverted. CDFA should allow for the pressurization, filtration and the use of pressurized irrigation coming from the storage reservoir. This could result in optimization of water and energy usage. CDFA should allow for the utilization of GHG savings that was offset from one source as GHG credit that can be used for a new GHG producing source such as a new pump that is used to pressurize the storage reservoir.

Question 1 Recommendations

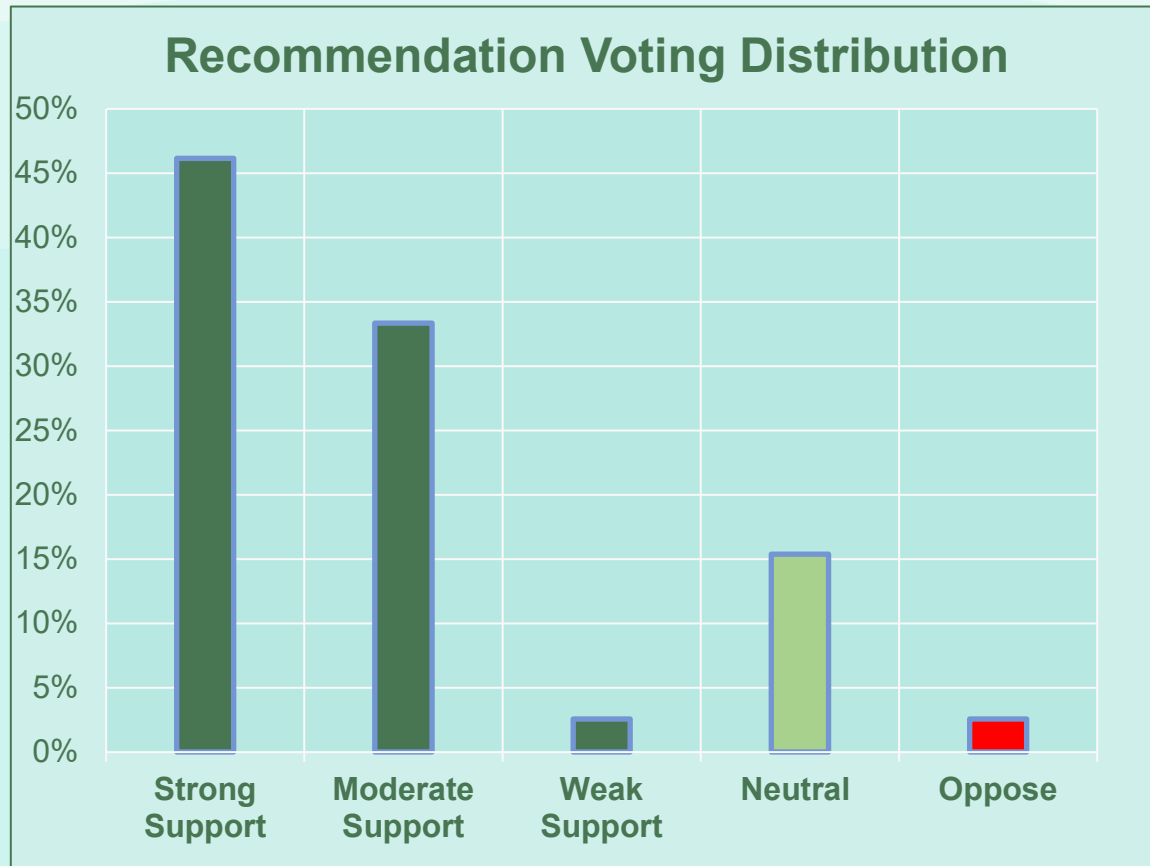
How might SWEEP evolve

Recommendation: CDFA should allow for individual farmers that are supplied pressurized water from an irrigation district a pathway to apply for the SWEEP program. CDFA should make sure that the farmers that are supplied with surface water delivery systems are allowed.



Question 1 Recommendations

How might SWEEP evolve



Recommendation: CDFA should encourage innovative approaches by updating the application and GHG/water savings tool to allow for growers to insert their own project types. Specifically, CDFA should allow for an "Other" section in the GHG and water savings tools so growers can add their own projects and explain how they came to the savings they insert. CDFA should clarify in the application that other practices, besides the short list of common practices (drip irrigation, pump conversion, etc.), are allowed and encouraged. Fertilizer application type could be in the other category that is developed. This would require an update to the Quantification Tool to include an "other" selection.

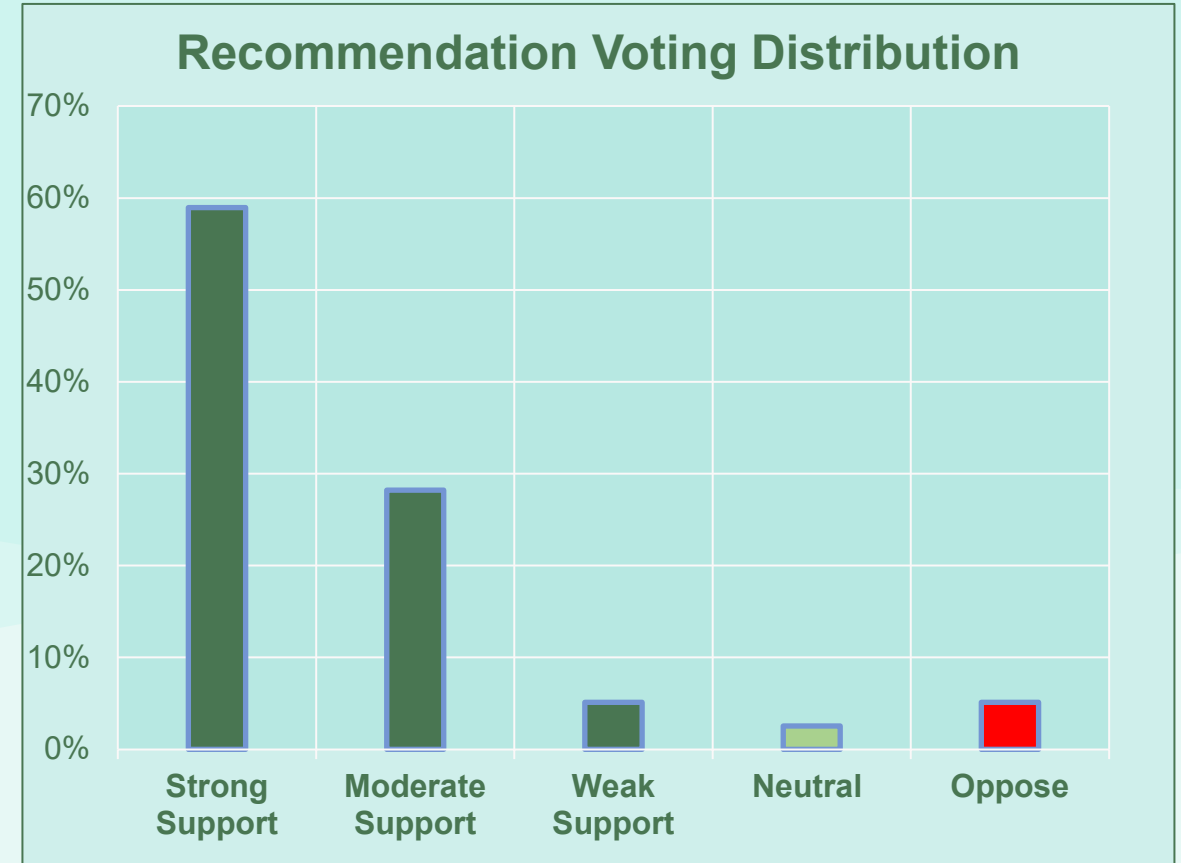
Opposition: This could lead to lots of speculation and the inclusion of unproven technologies

Question 2 Recommendations

Improve Participation

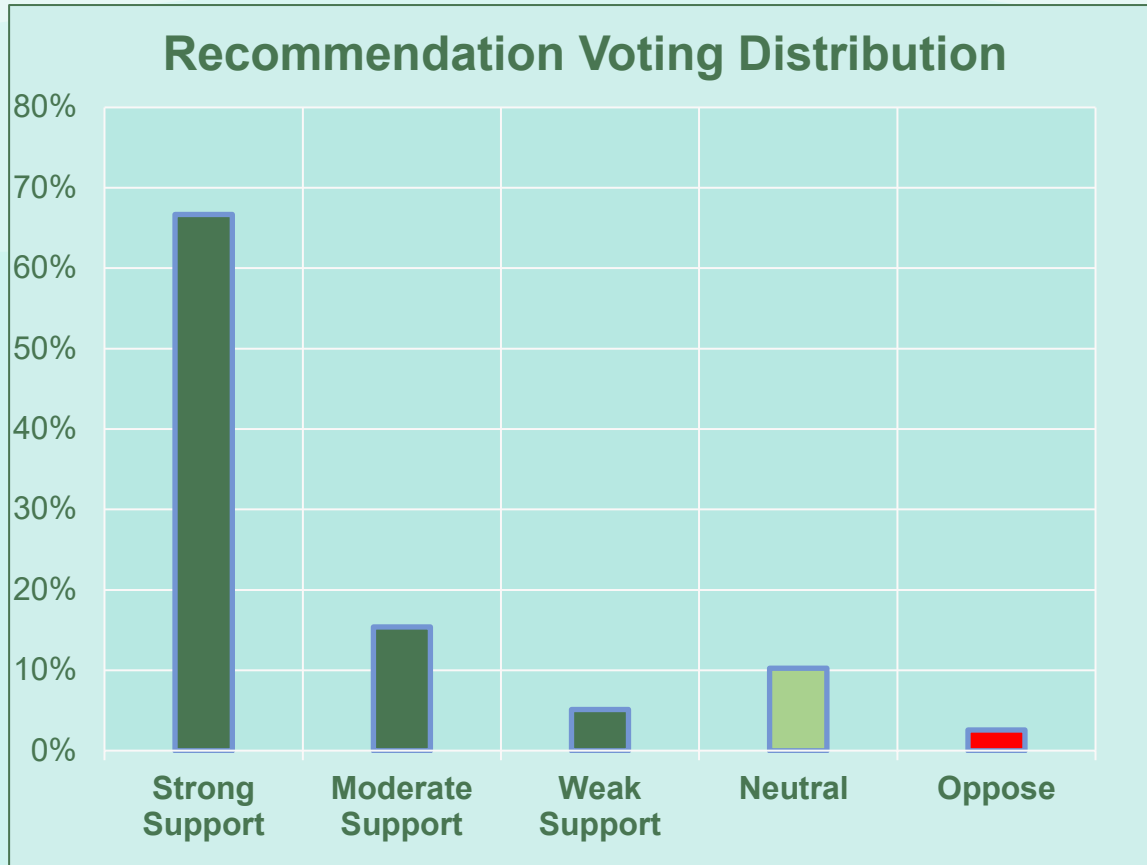
Recommendation: CDFA should provide outreach, educational materials and, to the degree possible, the application in multiple languages, prioritizing Spanish. Additionally, technical assistance in various languages should also be provided and prioritized.

Opposition: Materials in languages other than English are not an effective method of getting information across. A more effective method is having non-English speaking representatives/technical assistance available.



Question 2 Recommendations

Improve Participation



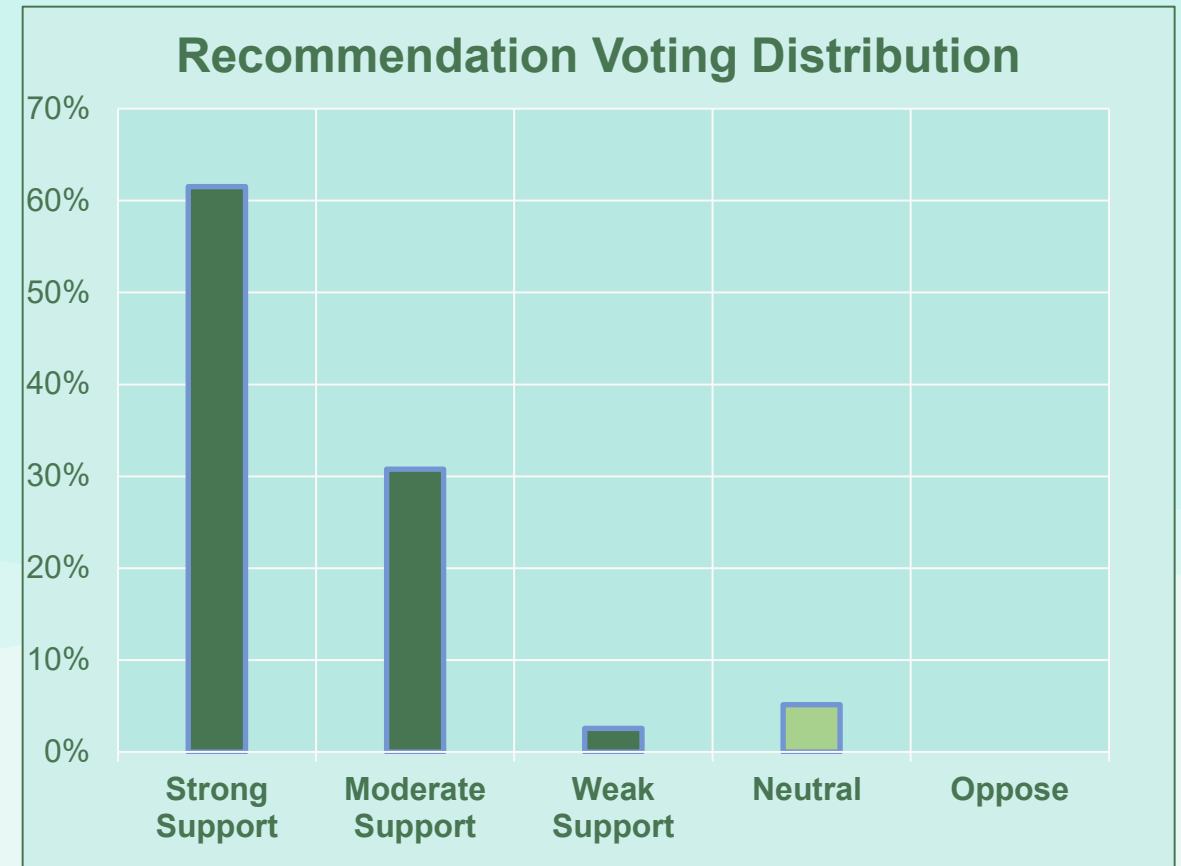
Recommendation: CDFA should allow farmers to apply for 25% advance payment more than once, so that they can request an additional payment after they have used up their first 25%.

Opposition: No comments provided

Question 3 Recommendations

Promotion and Coordination

Recommendation: CDFA should Increase the pre-application outreach period to six months and the application window to 90 days to accommodate farmers' harvest and work schedules. CDFA should hold the application period in early winter when most farmers are not in harvest or planting season, but ensure it is long enough so that technical assistance providers are not impacted during holiday season.

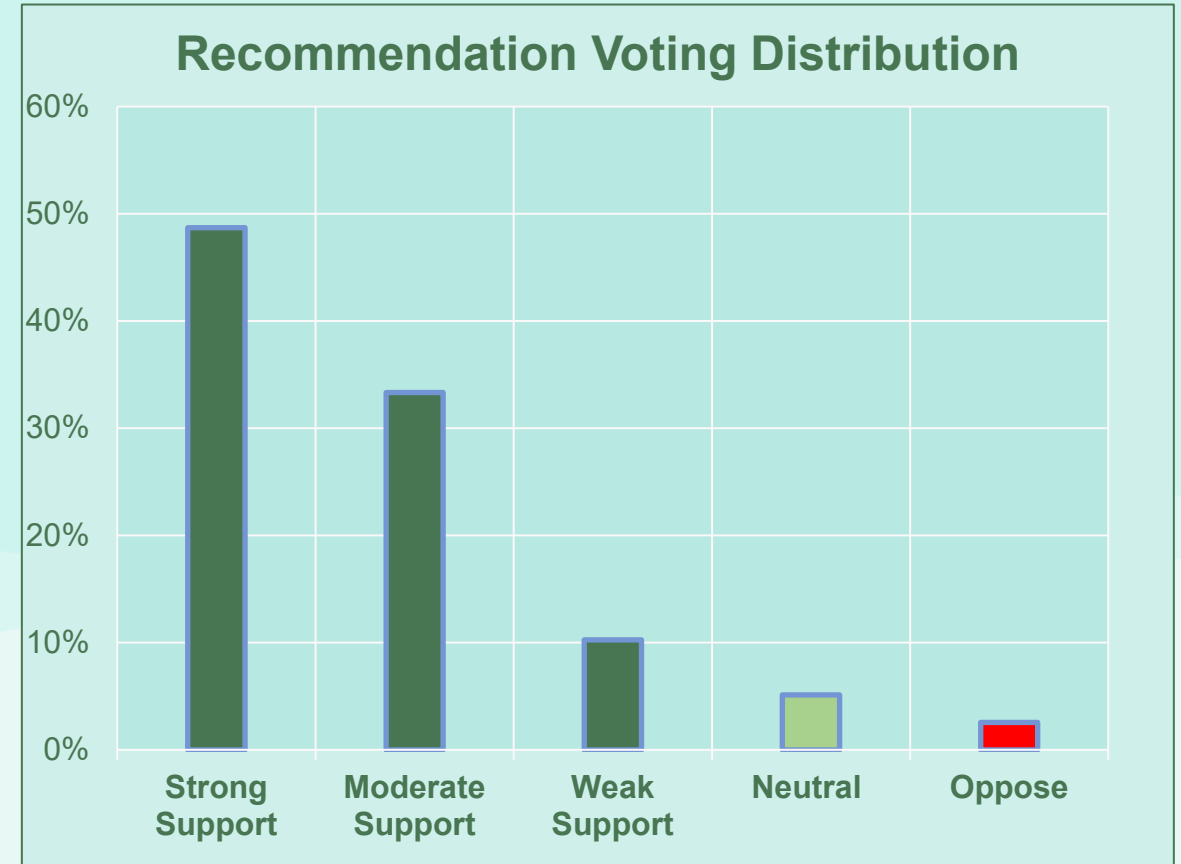


Question 3 Recommendations

Promotion and Coordination

Recommendation: CDFA should divide funding into two categories: "Water-focused" or "water- and GHG-focused" potentially setting aside specific funding amount for each category of project.

Opposition: CDFA should capture the GHG reductions due to the energy savings that results from a water project

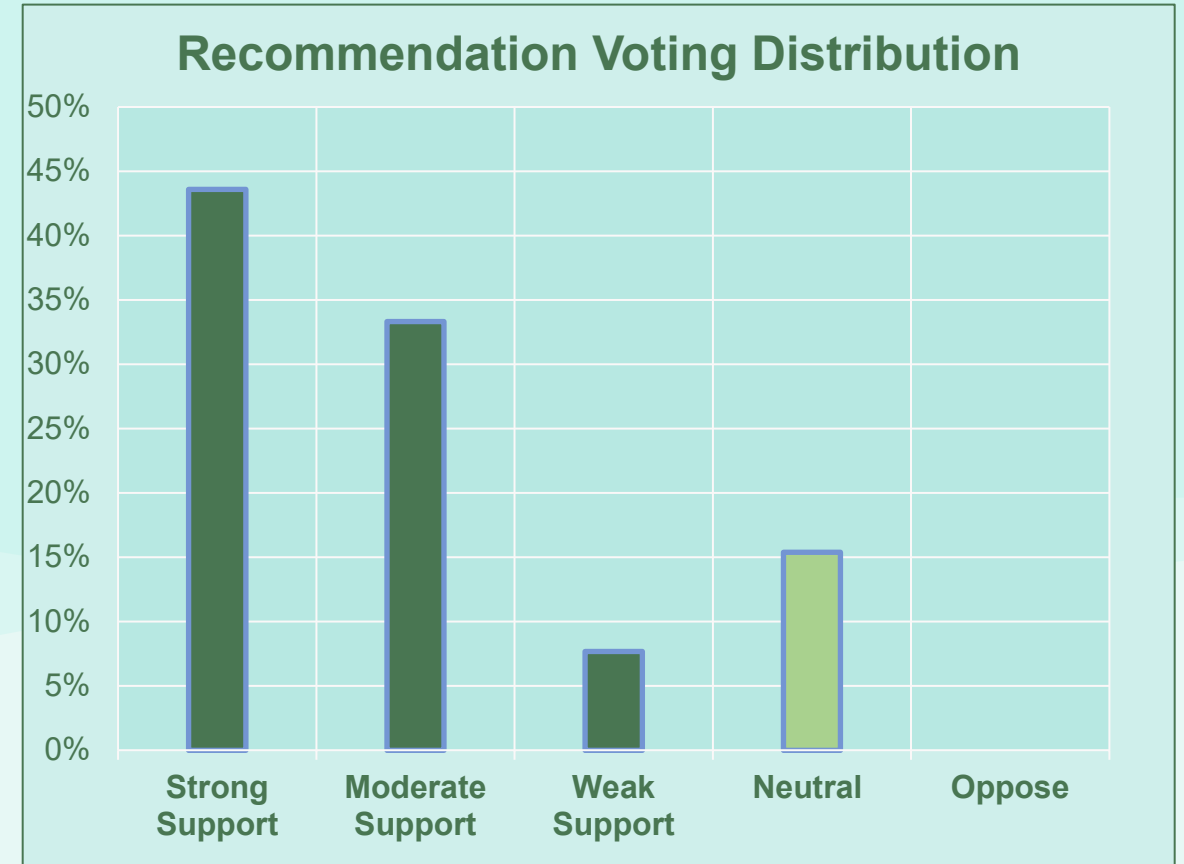


Question 3 Recommendations

Promotion and Coordination

Recommendation:

CDFA should divide funding into three program categories: GHG-first, Water-first and Combined projects. Allow growers to apply for funds to cover "water-focused" or "GHG-focused" projects, potentially setting aside specific funding amount for each category of project.



Ad Hoc Advisory Member Feedback

- Certain recommendations would likely benefit from further refinement and collaboration.
- There is some overlap and redundancy on some recommendations.
- Willingness by some AAG members to continue to volunteer their time to support the implementation of some of these technical recommendations (e.g., updating the program's GHG/water savings calculators and application review process to accommodate new practices or technologies).
- One recommendation for strengthening a process like this in the future is to prioritize farmers' feedback in the beginning of the process and again at the end on the final draft of the recommendations. As the intended beneficiaries of this program and the folks most directly impacted by any changes, farmers' input should be weighted more heavily, but given their hectic and dynamic schedules, they often aren't able to attend multiple or full-day meetings (as we saw in this process). This challenge can be mitigated somewhat by actively soliciting and centering their input on the front and back end of the process and asking other participants to carefully consider those farmers' priorities and concerns.

All AAG member feedback included in Final Report

AAG Member & Public Comment

Report will be released shortly after the EFA SAP meeting

30 Day public comment period





Thank you!



SWEEP TEAM

Carolyn Cook

Scott Weeks

Steph Jamis

Michael Wolff

AGENDA ITEM 7



HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM



Environmental Farming Act - Science Advisory Panel Meeting

Kathryn Mulligan

April 29, 2021

Sacramento, CA



Outline

- 2017, 2018, and 2020 HSP Incentives and Demonstration Programs Awarded Projects Updates
- New Management Practices Process

2017 HSP INCENTIVES AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS AWARDED PROJECTS - UPDATE

Type	Number	Working on Cost Share for Year 3	Submitted Soil Organic Matter Reports
Incentives	71	71	32
Type	Number	Working on Cost Share for Year 3	Submitted Final Report
Demonstration	26	26	15

2018 HSP INCENTIVES AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS AWARDED PROJECTS - UPDATE

Type	Number	Working on Year 2	Received Extension
Incentives	179	144	35 (Prop 68) GGRF funded projects await decision on extension
Demonstration	20	20	We will know in July 2021 if they can receive an extension

2020 HSP INCENTIVES PROGRAM AWARDED PROJECTS - UPDATE

Background: During the grant agreement execution period, more projects were added due to funds becoming available from cancelled projects during pre-project consultations.

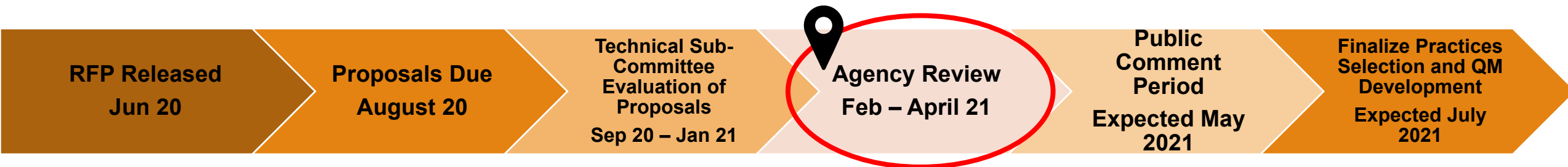
- *Last report: 316 projects totaling \$21.25 million selected for awards.*
- Current: 324 projects were awarded totaling \$21.78 million by Dec 31, 2020.

Item	Awarded Amount	Percent of Total Amount
94 projects - Benefits to Social Disadvantaged Farmers /Ranchers (SDFR)	\$ 5.8 million	27%
140 projects located at AB1550 Disadvantaged/Low-income Communities	\$9.8 million	45%
27 projects - Benefits to Priority Populations	\$ 1.9 million	9%

NEW MANAGEMENT PRACTICES UPDATE

- Proposals submitted between June 29, 2020 and August 28, 2020.
- 9 proposals received including practices such as biochar application, manure application, re-saturation of delta soils, food waste hydrolysate application, humates application and organic residential compost sharing.
- List of submitted proposals at:

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/2020-HSPNewPracticesProposalsSummary.pdf>



Thank you!

Questions?

Contact us: CDFA.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov



AGENDA ITEM 8



Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grants

Update to CDFA Environmental Farming Act
Science Advisory Panel - April 29, 2021

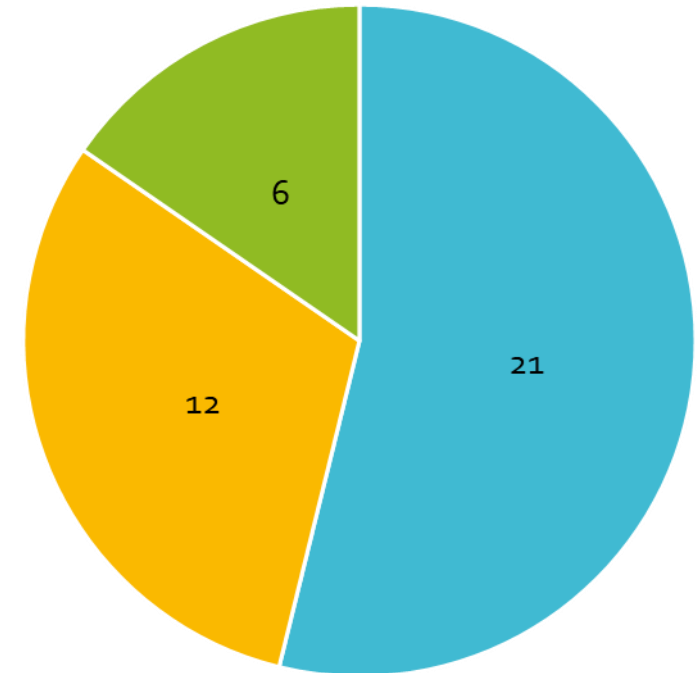
Recent Solicitation

- The January California State Budget Proposal included funding for the Healthy Soils Program and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program.
 - \$30 M for HSP
 - \$40 M for SWEEP
- On February 24, CDFA announced an application period for technical assistance providers for funding to support the HSP and SWEEP programs should funding become available in 2021.
 - Proactive
 - Contingent upon funding appropriated in Final Budget
 - The framework of the program remained unchanged including program requirements, maximum award per Climate Smart Ag appropriation
 - The application portal and templates were updated

Response to Solicitation

- Application period closed March 22
- 39 applications were submitted
 - 6 for SWEEP
 - 15 for HSP
 - 18 for both
- \$5.8M requested

Applicant Organization



- Resource Conservation District
- Non-profit
- Academic

Next Steps

- Applications went through administrative review to confirm eligibility and completeness and technical review to evaluate based upon the scoring criteria
- Currently waiting for the State budget to be finalized and approved
- Projects will be funded based upon:
 - Amount of funding appropriated to HSP and SWEEP
 - Score from technical review
 - Consideration to geographic coverage
- Anticipate executing grant agreements as soon as possible to facilitate HSP and SWEEP solicitations

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html>

AGENDA ITEM 9

AGENDA ITEM 10