

# ROUNDTABLE

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE TIMBER HARVEST PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

AB 1492 LEADERSHIP TEAM



CALIFORNIA  
NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
AGENCY



CalEPA  
California Environmental  
Protection Agency



May 15, 2026

# WELCOME!



Purpose



Meeting Format



Facilitators and Panel  
Members



# OUR GOAL

To gather input to build on recent Lean 6 Sigma research and recommendations and assist AB 1492 Leadership Team in prioritizing work centered around those recommendations.



# AGENDA

Welcome/Introductions	9:05 – 9:15 am
Background	9:15 – 9:40 am
Recommendations	9:40-10:15 am
Break	10:15 -10:30 am
Comment	10:30 – 12:00 pm
Lunch	12:00 – 1:00 pm
Further Comment & Next Steps	1:00-2:00 pm

**BACKGROUND:  
AB 1492 AND  
LEADERSHIP TEAM**

# AB 1492 - LEGISLATION

## Timber Regulation & Forest Restoration Fund:

1% assessment on retail lumber supports timber operations oversight, forest restoration grant programs, and addresses broader forest and climate resilience needs.



# AB 1492 LEGISLATION (PRC § 4629.2)

- Promote sustainable forest practices consistent with state laws.
- Maintain stable funding for the forest practice program.
- Support in-state timber production under California environmental standards and retention of forested landscapes.
- Fund forest restoration, including habitat and water-quality improvements.
- Advance forest management aligned with AB 32 climate goals.
- Increase transparency, performance tracking, and streamlined data use in forest regulation.
- Improve regulatory efficiency across State agencies.
- Update regulations to incentivize best practices for natural resource protection and improve broader-scale road and riparian management.



# AB 1492 LEADERSHIP TEAM WHO ARE WE?

Primary objectives of AB 1492 as they relate to the review team agencies are:

- ✓ Administrative accountability, efficiency, and transparency
- ✓ Timber harvest document review, inspections, approval, and enforcement
- ✓ Reporting
- ✓ Establishing and evaluating ecological performance measures (monitoring)
- ✓ Providing forest restoration grants



# AB 1492 LEADERSHIP TEAM

## WHO ARE WE?

Lisa Lien-Mager, Deputy Secretary, CNRA

Loretta Moreno, CNRA

Jan Van Susteren, BOF

John Ramaley, CALFIRE

Colby Forrester, CALFIRE

Kevin Ponce, CDFW

Elliot Chasin, CDFW

Cheryl Griffith, California Geological Survey

Bill Short, California Geological Survey

Kimberly Carr, Energy Safety

Katy Landau, Special Advisor for Water Policy, CalEPA

Nick Martorano, State Water Board

Paul Hann, State Water Board

Clint Snyder, Central Valley Water Board

Angela Wilson, Central Valley Water Board

Jonathan Warmerdam, North Coast Water Board



# AB 1492 LEADERSHIP TEAM

## WHAT WE DO:

- Oversee Interagency Review Team Functions: Coordinate and oversee California's multi-agency timber regulation program to build cohesion across interagency missions and with regulated community
- Increase Program Efficiency and Performance: Update operations and policies to continuously improve outcomes as it relates to timber harvest plan review
- Inform Development and Implementation of Forest Management Policies: Inform rulemaking and other forest policy development including interpreting and implementing rules, regulations, and statute (Boards and Commissions; Legislation; etc.)
- Support Emergency Response: Provide technical support for emergency response to protect public safety and forest ecosystem resources (e.g., wildfires, hazard tree removal, etc.)
- Enable Forest Resilience: Inform and respond to forest management and forest resilience challenges including cutting the green tape initiatives and advancing biomass utilization, etc.

# AB 1492 LEADERSHIP TEAM

## MORE ON WHAT WE DO:

- Promote Forest and Watershed Restoration: Promote forest and watershed restoration by providing grants and supporting on-the-ground efforts with partners
- Address Funding Needs: Seek funding to reflect evolving operational needs and legislative mandates
- Implement Ecological Performance Measures: Establish data and information systems to effectuate monitoring mandates
- Support Stakeholder Communications: Conduct outreach and communication on program and administration priorities
- Prepare Annual Legislative Reports: Account for accomplishments and resources expended

# AB 1492 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

## COMPLEMENTARY PRIORITY WORK AREAS

### Pre, Active, and Post Emergency Response

- Vegetation management project facilitation and oversight
- Emergency response and incident command support
- Post-fire assessments
- Post-fire debris and hazard tree removal activities
  - Develop and regularly update related Environmental Protection Plans (EPP)
- Post-fire recovery and restoration project grant administration and permitting

### Stakeholder engagement

- Permit development related tribal engagement and public outreach
- Develop guidance documents to facilitate regulatory compliance
- Broader forest management engagement (climate resilience; biomass utilization; etc.)

### Oversight

- Rules implementation (BOF, Water Boards, CDFW, etc.)
- Agency specific inspection, outreach, compliance assistance for a variety of regulated forestland management activities



### Monitoring

- BOF Effectiveness Monitoring Committee
- Review team agency monitoring. Can be site or issue specific, or general performance/effectiveness monitoring.
- Agency specific monitoring (e.g., pesticides, wildlife, post-fire impacts, etc.)
- Statewide monitoring (forested systems)- ecological performance measures and management effectiveness assessments

### Enforcement

- Agency specific enforcement activities from notification of deficiencies to administrative civil penalties to criminal actions.

# WHAT OTHERS DO

- Enact rules, legislation or statutory changes related to forest and timber policy (i.e., Boards, Commissions, Legislature)
- Control funding decisions and allocations as determined by the Department of Finance, Legislature, and Governor
- Control land management priorities (e.g., State Demonstration Forests)

# LEAN 6 SIGMA REPORT

# WHY LEAN SIX SIGMA, WHY NOW?



# 80 Years of THP Review Evolution



1945:

Forest Practice Act

1973:

Z'berg –Nejedly Act

1976:

CEQA Functional Equivalency

1994:

Little Hoover Commission Report

2012:

AB 1492 Established

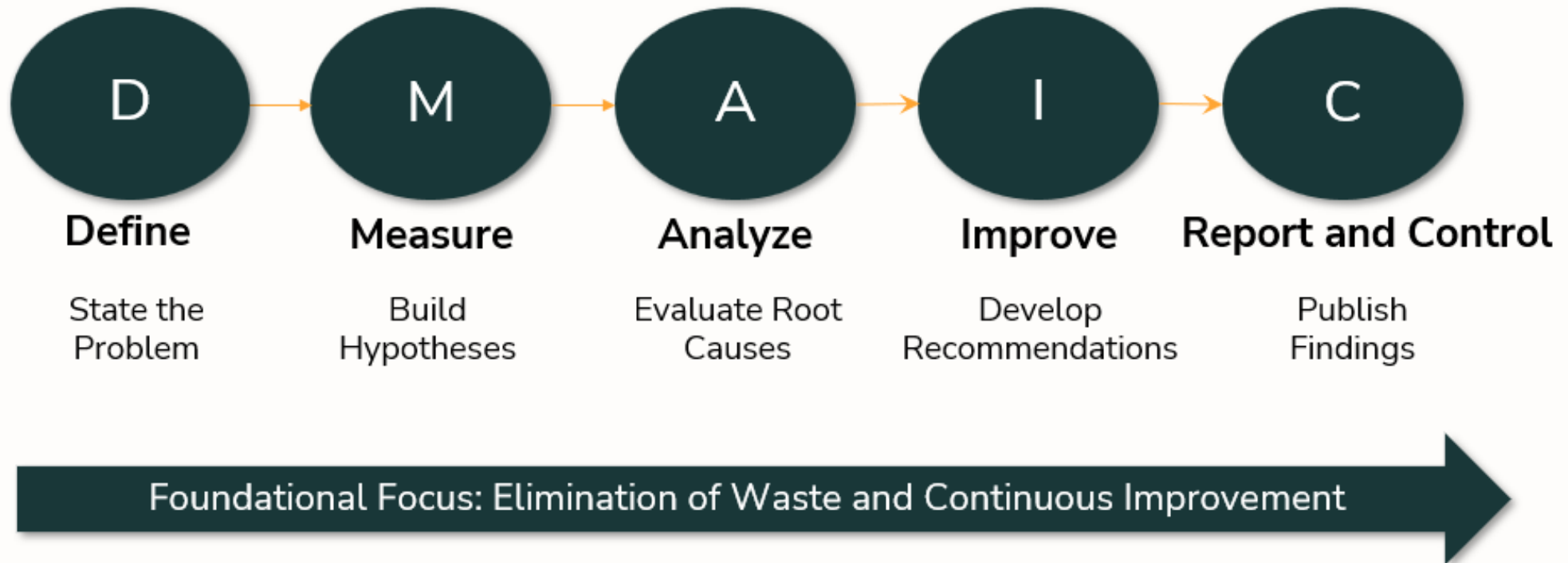
2013:

Redding Pilot Project

2025 / 2026:

Lean Six Sigma Program Evaluation

# NIVACK'S LEAN SIX SIGMA EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



# INFORMATION COLLECTION APPROACH FOR THIS EVALUATION

## Interviews/ Consultations

### PURPOSE:

Gather Subjective  
Qualitative Insights

### SCOPE:

- 27 Individual Interviews
  - Agencies
  - Industry
  - NGOs / Others
- 1 Tribal Roundtable
- 3 Tribal Consultations
- 4 Focus Group Sessions

## Survey

### PURPOSE:

Gather Subjective  
Quantitative Insights

### SCOPE:

- 37 Submitted Surveys

## Program Data Review

### PURPOSE:

Validate Available  
Objective Data

### SCOPE:

- Reported Metrics
- CalTREES data
- Agency data
- Program process documentation

# STAKEHOLDER REPORTED CHALLENGES



1. Areas of insufficient program clarity.
  - Roles and responsibilities across all stakeholders
  - Process requirements and governance
2. Lack of alignment on key/shared outcomes and measures of success across relevant stakeholders.
3. Issues with THP acceptance rates and turnaround times.
4. Ineffective/inconsistent agency and industry training.

# STAKEHOLDER REPORTED CHALLENGES CONTINUED...



5. Inconsistent or non-existent communication protocols.
6. Limitations of existing technology (primarily CalTREES).
7. Use of outdated submission processes and mapping standards (paper, PDF).
8. Availability and experience profile of agency and industry resources.
9. Long-term sustainability of current THP process.

# WHAT OBJECTIVE PROGRAM INFORMATION / DATA REVEALED

- Over the last 5 years:
  - 50% of THP submissions assessed are confirmed to be in conformance within 75 days of submission.
  - 37% of THP submissions are returned for insufficiency after initial CAL FIRE review.
  - 50% of harvest activities begin within 150 days of THP approval.
    - <70% of plan submitter requests for adjacent permits (Water Board, CDFW) are received within 30 days of CAL FIRE's Notice of Conformance.
    - 95% of Water Board permits are issued within 30 days of request receipt.
    - 86% of draft Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreements are issued within 30 days of request.

# WHAT OBJECTIVE PROGRAM INFORMATION / DATA REVEALED

- CAL FIRE THP process documentation is maintained and accessible as part of the published Forest Practice Rules. Evidence of periodic / ongoing review for sufficiency was not consistently observed.
- Agency training on the THP process is available, but participation is not consistently tracked / certified.
- Industry training on the THP process was observed to be inconsistent in availability, content and application.

# SUMMARY OF NIVACK RECOMMENDATIONS

- *How do these recommendation align with your top priorities?*
- *Which recommendation has the highest impact?*
- *What, if anything, is missing from the recommendations?*

**CONSIDER THIS**

# RECOMMENDATION 1: CLARIFY AND ALIGN ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND PROCEDURES TO BETTER MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

- **Address Confusion:** Clarify roles, responsibilities, and procedures to improve understanding for plan submitters and stakeholders and improve workflows across agencies and affected parties
- **Align Expectations:** Produce support materials that help promote consistent interpretation of requirements

## RECOMMENDATION 2: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION, NOTIFICATION PRACTICES, AND INFORMATION FLOW

- **Standardize Communication Framework:** Establish a clear and comprehensive communication framework to ensure consistent messaging, clear points of contact, and clarify responsible parties.
- **Timely and Accurate Notifications:** Address gaps in notification protocols to provide stakeholders with clear, accurate, accessible information.
- **Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement:** Improve comment period management and transparency to reduce frustration and support meaningful stakeholder engagement.

## RECOMMENDATION 3: REDESIGN AND STANDARDIZE COMMUNICATIONS TO PROVIDE CLARITY TO THE THP WORKFLOW

- **Evaluate THP Returns:** To help determine failure points in THP submission, assess THP return frequency and associated reoccurring issues. Prioritize topical areas that pose higher risk, are complex, or where frequent insufficiencies or errors occur
  - **Redesign with Clean Sheet Approach:** Redesign supporting communication materials such as web content, guidance documents, etc., to improve understanding of THP workflow process (i.e., standardization and simplification).

# RECOMMENDATION 4: EMBED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- **Timely Tracking and Communication of Program and Operational Change:** Establish management framework to more regularly and comprehensively evaluate regulatory and operational changes against stakeholder expectations, perform gap identification, and create a prioritized process and protocols for absorbing, implementing, and notifying on updates as new regulations and procedures come online.

# RECOMMENDATION 5: ALIGN THP PROCESS WITH ADJACENT PERMITTING SYSTEMS (“PERMIT SYNCHRONIZATION”)

- **Identify System Gaps:** Evaluate duplication, delays, and gaps between THP certification and follow-on permits to help inform potential redesign of workflows to minimize delays and streamline process. \*Links to Recommendation 8 (Technology Upgrades)

## RECOMMENDATION 6: STRENGTHEN STATE AGENCY WORKFORCE CAPACITY, TRAINING, AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

- **Workforce Planning:** Establish comprehensive and up-to-date cross agency workforce plans that provide insight into workforce and workload distribution, capability, and retention rates across regions.
- **Enhance Standardize Training Programs:** Implement consistent onboarding and training to improve plan review quality and consistency to build stakeholder confidence and improve outcomes.
- **Succession Planning and Workforce Resilience:** Further invest in staffing stability/retention and capability development to sustain THP review system performance. Augment targeted professional development plans to prepare for retirements and improve continuity.

## RECOMMENDATION 7: STRENGTHEN INDUSTRIAL AND NON-INDUSTRIAL OPERATOR CAPACITY AND TRAINING

- **Focused Support for Small Non-Industrial Landowners:** Engage small and non-industrial landowners to improve understanding of availability of streamlined permit pathways (e.g., Forest Resilience Exemption) and bolster successful plan submission with tailored training and more accessible submission criteria information.
- **Enhanced Training for Larger Operations:** In partnership with industry leaders, establish consistent (voluntary) industry training and certification program that will keep Plan Submitters apprised of changes that affect plan submission and adjacent agency permitting requirements.

# RECOMMENDATION 8: MODERNIZE TECHNOLOGY AND ESTABLISH RELIABLE DATA ARCHITECTURE

- **Assess Cross-Agency Data Architecture:** Scope and consider improvements to CalTREES functionality (the State's unified timber harvest data architecture) to improve uptake of the technology, reduce confusion and foster consistent information sharing across agencies.
- **Modernize Workflow Tools:** Upgrade workflow tools and templates to enhance data accuracy and streamline THP submission processes.
- **Improve Mobile Capabilities:** Enhance mobile access supports for field staff by enabling remote data retrieval and input.

# RECOMMENDATION 9: IMPROVE PERFORMANCE METRICS, TRANSPARENCY, AND SHARED OUTCOMES

- **Reassess and Enhance Performance Metrics:** Expand breadth and depth of current legislative reporting metrics to capture diverse stakeholder priorities including ecological, cultural, and economic factors.

# BEYOND LEAN SIX SIGMA RECOMMENDATIONS

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION 10: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

- **Improve Leadership Accessibility and Responsiveness:** Evaluate the need for expanded opportunities for Leadership Team to engage tribes, regulated public, and the public on program operations including listening sessions, roundtables or consultations, workshops, and purpose-driven working groups.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION 11: IMPROVE TRIBAL REPRESENTATION IN DECISION MAKING

- **Better Address Tribal Concerns in THP Review Process:** Clarify and better communicate existing/available pathways and mechanisms for tribes to opt into THP review process in working with review team agencies. As needed and resources allow, establish roundtables and consultations to better understand points of disconnect or confusion.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

These themes collectively emphasize the need for:	Est. Task Duration*
Clarified roles, responsibilities, and expectations	(0-1 year)
Enhanced venues and frequency of communication	(0-1 year)
Updated, redesigned and standardized communications on THP workflow	(1-2 years)
A sustained commitment to continuous improvement/change management for THPs	(2+ years)
Alignment of THPs with adjacent permitting (permit synchronization)	(2-3 years)
Focus on workforce development and retention	(2+ years)
Modernization of technology, including CalTREES	(3+ years)
Improved metrics and transparency	(1-2 years)
More frequent and direct engagement with Leadership Team and program staff	(0-1 year)

*\*Commencement and implementation will be staggered according to resources available and based upon consideration of stakeholder priorities*

**BREAK (15 MIN)**

- *How do these recommendation align with your top priorities?*
- *Which recommendation has the highest impact?*
- *What, if anything, is missing from the recommendations?*

**OPEN COMMENT**

**LUNCH (12:00-1:00 PM)**

- *How do these recommendation align with your top priorities?*
- *Which recommendation has the highest impact?*
- *What, if anything, is missing from the recommendations?*

**OPEN COMMENT**

**NEXT STEPS**

# NEXT STEPS

- Review and consider feedback from today's workshop
- Board of Forestry discussion | Forest Practice Committee June 2026 (gather and consider additional feedback from Board and public)
- Incorporate feedback obtained from Board of Forestry, Forest Practice Committee Meeting
- Develop AB 1492 Work Plan informed by:
  - Lean Six Sigma recommendations and associated feedback
  - Integrate with relevant additional workload (legislative mandates; emergency response [pre-post fire]; California's Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Action Plan; etc.)



# NEXT STEPS

Do you have more to say and we didn't already hear from you today?

Please provide comment to Leadership Team no later than **May 22, 2026**.

Please email: [Loretta.Moreno@resources.ca.gov](mailto:Loretta.Moreno@resources.ca.gov)

Please use subject line: "Lean Six Sigma Recommendations Comment"



THANK YOU FOR  
PARTICIPATING