

The California Land Equity Task Force: Can a legislative reform slow the trends of farmland consolidation in the heart of America's breadbasket?

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[Online]

Ownership and Croplands



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The California Land Equity Task Force

Presentation overview

- **Is land reform on the policy agenda in the US?**
- **The California Land Equity Task Force**
- **Key reflections**

Strong legal entitlements

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Syllabus

CEDAR POINT NURSERY ET AL. *v.* HASSID ET AL.

CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR
THE NINTH CIRCUIT

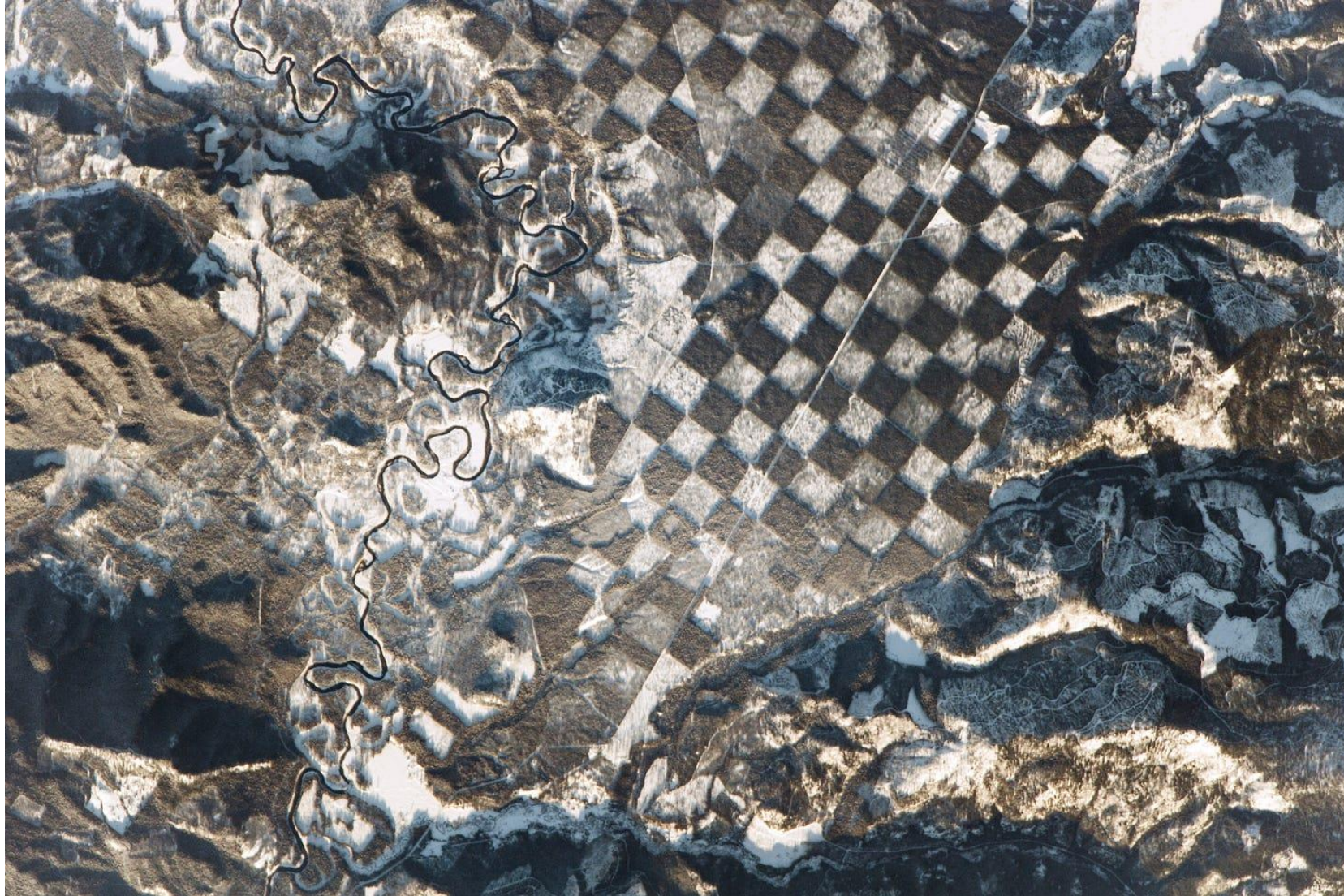
No. 20–107. Argued March 22, 2021—Decided June 23, 2021

Held: California’s access regulation constitutes a *per se* physical taking.
Pp. 4–20.

(a) The growers’ complaint states a claim for an uncompensated taking in violation of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. Pp. 4–17.

(1) The Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment, applicable to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment, provides: “[N]or shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.” When the government physically acquires private property for a public use, the Takings Clause obligates the government to provide the owner

Strong legal entitlements?



“He believed the whole mountain was his and that no one but [he] was allowed to be there ... like a king.”

– DEFENSE ATTORNEY RYAN SEMERAD ON RANCH OWNER FRED ESHELMAN

Existing *agricultural* land reforms efforts

Gov. Reynolds Signs Foreign Ownership of Land Bill into Law

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 | Press Release

Today, Governor Kim Reynolds signed [SF 2204](#) into law, a bill for an act relating to interests in agricultural land acquired or held by foreign businesses, foreign governments, or nonresident aliens, or by agents, trustees, or fiduciaries thereof, by providing for registration and reporting requirements, providing for enforcement, and providing penalties.

“Iowa’s laws on foreign ownership of land have long been recognized as some of the strongest in the nation, with other states looking to us when crafting their own policies. Yet, in the decades since we first addressed this issue, adversaries like China have grown significantly more aggressive on the world stage, constantly looking for any opening to assert themselves at the expense of our country. One all-too-common weapon in this battle is the purchase of American farmland.

“Our state’s fertile soil and unmatched production capacity make us a natural target for this strategy. Our farm families produce 10 percent of the nation’s food supply and Iowa ranks as America’s top producer of biofuels. That makes us a natural leader in the race to stave off the evolving threat to American agriculture. When Iowa speaks, the country listens. And with this bill our message is unmistakable: American soil belongs in American hands.”

Existing *agricultural* land reforms efforts

Booker Introduces Legislation to Protect Farmland from Corporate Consolidation

JULY 27, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) introduced the *Farmland for Farmers Act*, legislation that would address rising rates of corporate farmland investment by limiting future ownership and leasing by corporate investors to ensure that farmland in the United States stays in the hands of farmers.

Farmland ownership has long been a source of wealth and power in rural America. However, as large corporations continue to gobble up agricultural land as part of their investment strategy, family farmers are forced out of business and rural communities are hollowed out. The number of institutionally owned properties rose three-fold from 2009 to 2022, and the market value of that property increased from less than \$2 billion dollars to over \$14 billion in the same time period.

The legislation would address several issues within our agriculture sector:

- **Protecting Rural Communities:** With over 400 million acres of U.S. farmland projected

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

_____ introduced the following bill; which was read twice
and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To address the history of discrimination against Black farmers and ranchers, to require reforms within the Department of Agriculture to prevent future discrimination, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Justice for Black Farmers Act of 2023”.

Californian farmland governance

outdoorproperties.com/property_type/farms-ranches



Palo Escrito Ranch \$17,700,000
Monterey County, CA 8,811 ± Acres

Imagine 8,811 acres of coastal range land, custom 4-bedroom home, additional 1 bedroom home, barn, horse pens, creek and fully functional cattle operation, with the highest peak on the Santa Lucia Mt. Range, overlooking the Salinas Valley, Carmel Valley and ... Read More

PROPERTY TYPE:Cattle, Equestrian, Farms and Ranches, Fishing and Hunting, Luxury Homes over \$1,000,000, Recreation



AP Ranch \$16,900,000
Siskiyou County, CA 14,000 ± Acres

Located in scenic, rural western Siskiyou County, California, lies the sprawling 14,000 ± acre AP Ranch, steeped in history. This historic ranch offers a unique opportunity to own a piece of the American West, where ... Read More

PROPERTY TYPE:Cattle, Equestrian, Farms and Ranches, Fishing and Hunting, Homes and Cabins, Mountain Home For Sale, Recreation, Timberland



The Carroll Ranch \$15,595,000
Shasta County, CA 3,068 ± Acres

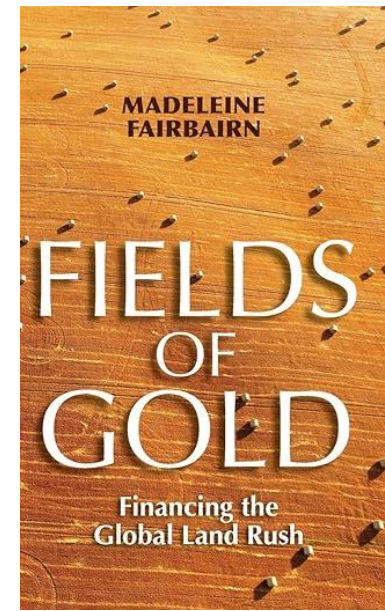
You dream of a ranch with extreme privacy, abundant water, fertile farm ground, irrigated pasture, and self-sustaining cattle operation; top it off with a stunning custom home and breathtaking views.

nd Community Custom - Draw Solano County, California, U

Map Layers NEW Hide Layers Refresh Results

Listings (109 results) Per page: 10 Sort By: Newest For Sale Recently Sold Filters

02/07/2025	\$1,920,000	160 ac.	Fresno County, CA
<p>Status: ACTIVE</p> <p>00 West Shields Ave, Firebaugh, CA</p> <p>I-5 and Shields I Almonds and Open Ground</p>			
<p>LAND BROKER CO-OP CONNECTED Listing Details</p>			
02/07/2025	\$1,350,000	41.48 ac.	San Joaquin County, CA
<p>Status: ACTIVE</p> <p>25045 N. McIntire Road, Clements, CA</p> <p>McIntire Ranch</p>			



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The California Land Equity Task Force

The 13-member Task Force is an independent body established in the [California Budget Act of 2022](#) (AB 179) directed to “submit a report (by Jan. 1, 2026) to the Legislature and Governor ... that includes a set of policy recommendations on how to address the agricultural land equity crisis.” Following two years of meetings, site visits, guest speakers, presentations, and community engagement sessions across California, the Task Force members are working to finalize the report of recommendations by the deadline.



The structure of the proposal

Report and Recommendations of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

1. Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.
2. Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and land stewards.
3. Halt and reverse agricultural land consolidation.
4. Preserve California's agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship.
5. Prioritize secure land tenure.
6. Support urban agriculture.

Draft for Review at November 2025 Meeting
11-3-2025

Key policy ideas

- Establish a Restorative Land Fund.
- Return publicly held land to California Native American Tribes.
- Facilitate the return of privately held land to California Native American Tribes.
- Establish a California Producer Pension Fund.
- Establish and fund a Land Market Monitoring Program.
- Address power imbalances in landowner-tenant relationships.

Key takeaways from CA ALETF

- Agricultural land
- Priority Producers
- Land observatory
- Preemptive rights
- Land return in some cases
- Funding and training

m+ Democratic state plans to take farmland from white owners and redistribute to 'help rebuild stolen wealth'

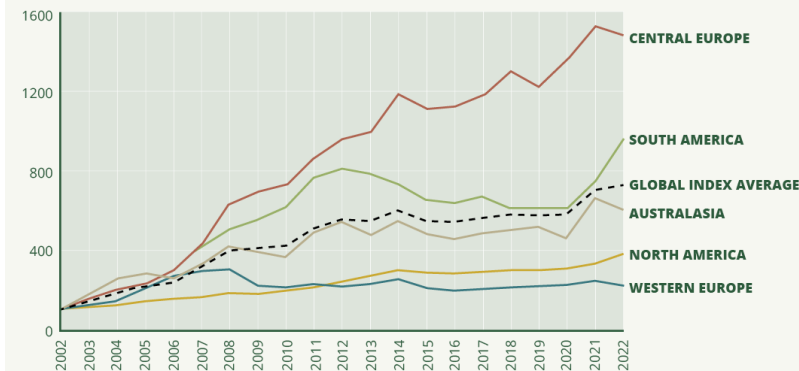
CALIFORNIA

'Stolen Land': Gavin Newsom's 'Agricultural Equity' Advisers Prepare Plan To Redistribute Farmland to Racial Minorities

LAND SQUEEZE

What is driving unprecedented pressures on farmland and what can be done to achieve equitable access to land?

GLOBAL LAND PRICES ON THE RISE SINCE 2002



- Global land prices have doubled since 2008
- The 1% largest farms control 70% of land.



Radford University

[Thank you!]



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