

## CalEPA Tribal Advisory Committee

### November 2025: CalRecycle Report

CalRecycle recognizes California Native American tribes (Tribes) as the original stewards of California, whose leadership can guide us toward a future free of waste and trash pollution. Consultation, collaboration, and input from Tribes on our rules, regulations, policies, and programs, can help to advance decisions and policies for improved circularity. By returning to a circular economy that emphasizes sustainability through reduction, reuse, recycling, and recirculation of materials, we can regenerate healthy ecosystems and build thriving communities.

The Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle) has been working with Tribes throughout the state for many years and aims to further strengthen tribal consultation and engagement through the establishment of the Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal Relations, Education and Outreach.

Many opportunities exist for Tribes to engage with CalRecycle and participate in programs, including:

- Building California's Zero-Waste, Circular Economy
- Disaster Debris Removal
- Illegal Dumping Cleanup and Mitigation
- Other CalRecycle Grant and Loan Programs

### Consultations

No consultations were conducted during this quarter.

### Resources and Opportunities

#### Resources

- [CalRecycle Funding Homepage](https://calrecycle.ca.gov/funding/) (https://calrecycle.ca.gov/funding/)
- [CA Grant Portal Site](https://www.grants.ca.gov/) (https://www.grants.ca.gov/)
- Email: [grant.assistance@calrecycle.ca.gov](mailto:grant.assistance@calrecycle.ca.gov) or [Raaz.Morairty@calrecycle.ca.gov](mailto:Raaz.Morairty@calrecycle.ca.gov) for grant questions.

#### Opportunities

All funding opportunities listed below are either currently active or upcoming.

Funding Program	What's funded
<a href="#"><u>Beverage Container Redemption Innovation Grant Program (RIG 5)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minimum requested amount must be at least \$500,000. The maximum requested amount must not exceed \$10,000,000 per grant award.</li> <li>• Applications due June 30, 2026.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement (FR)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleanup of illegal solid waste sites on farm or ranch property.</li> <li>• Applications due January 6, 2026.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Increased Recycling of Empty Glass Beverage Containers</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$4,000,000 available for each fiscal year.</li> <li>• Up to \$2,000,000 maximum available per applicant per fiscal year (FY)</li> <li>• Applications due December 4, 2025.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Local Government Waste Tire Cleanup (TCU)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection, removal, transportation, recycling, and disposal of waste tires from illegal tire piles and areas where illegal dumping has occurred along public rights-of-way.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Local Government Waste Tire Amnesty (TA)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct free amnesty events for the public to recycle their waste tires.</li> <li>• Application Materials for fiscal year (FY) 2026–27 will tentatively be available in early Spring 2026.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Tire-Derived Aggregate (TDA)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides assistance for solving a variety of engineering challenges. TDA, which is produced from shredded tires, is lightweight, free-draining, and a less expensive alternative to conventional lightweight aggregates.</li> <li>• Application materials for fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 are due July 17, 2025.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Tire-Derived Product (TDP)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the use of TDPs for repurposing projects such as pathways, landscaping, mats, curb stops, and ramps.</li> <li>• Application materials for fiscal year (FY) 2025–26 will tentatively be available spring 2025.</li> </ul>

## Engagement & Key Priority Projects

### CalRecycle's Extended Producer Responsibility Programs

CalRecycle oversees statewide extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs for paint, carpet, mattresses, pharmaceuticals and sharps waste, batteries, packaging, and textiles. These EPR programs are operated by non-profit stewardship organizations that are responsible for providing convenient program access throughout California. CalRecycle initiated an assessment of existing EPR programs to better understand Tribes' current access to EPR programs, including identifying ongoing efforts by stewardship organizations to coordinate with Tribes and barriers to participation. This assessment seeks to identify opportunities to coordinate with stewardship organizations to maximize tribal engagement in existing EPR programs and provide guidance for ensuring tribal considerations are included in regulatory processes and departmental decision-making for emerging EPR programs. The overall goal of the assessment is to provide greater access to CalRecycle's EPR programs while respecting tribal sovereignty (<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/epr/>).

### Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act of 2022

California's Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act ([SB 54, Allen, Chapter 75, Statutes of 2022](#)) requires industry to form a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) to create and implement a source reduction, collection and recycling program for their single-use packaging and single-use plastic food ware. CalRecycle began a [robust rulemaking process in 2023](#) that will be continued into 2025. CalRecycle is also collaboratively developing the first statewide needs assessment, which will guide the PRO's budget and plan detailing how California will meet the goals of SB 54.

### SB54 Needs Assessment Studies Tribal Engagement:

Two separate needs assessment studies have engaged with California Native American Tribes in various capacities. Both studies provided compensation to participants for sharing their expertise and knowledge through surveys, listening sessions, and roundtable discussions. Final reports and results from these studies, along with the broader needs assessment, will be published on CalRecycle's dedicated webpage on January 1, 2026. (<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/packaging/packaging-epr/needs-assessment/>)

*The Collection, Processing, and End Markets Study* conducted outreach to 40 Tribal communities via email and phone calls. The contractor led this engagement effort and compiled the feedback received. Tribal selection was based on several factors, including geographic location and the presence of recycling centers, and was approved by CalRecycle. Participating Tribes received compensation of \$1,500 for participating in listening sessions and an additional \$50 for completing a survey.

*The Source Reduction and Market Development Study* recruited multiple Tribal members through pop-up events. Tribal representatives including statewide members, elders, and leaders participated during the Native American Day event in Sacramento, as well as in up to 10 small-group online discussions or one-on-one interviews. A stipend of \$150 for a 1–1.5-hour session was provided to more than 60 participants, including community-based organizations, Tribal representatives, and disability advocates across the state.

### **Tribal Composting Needs Assessment and Permitting Guide**

CalRecycle recognizes the critical role and commitment of California Native American tribes (Tribes) in advancing climate solutions. Composting is a proven practice to reduce the GHG emissions from landfilling of organic waste. Compost is a valuable resource often used as a component of systems and treatments designed for carbon sequestration, food production, green space development, erosion control, fire remediation, stormwater management, and other uses. CalRecycle launched the Tribal Composting Needs Assessment and Permitting Guide to understand the priorities and resources needed by Tribes related to developing and operating composting facilities to divert materials from landfills and to help foster climate resilience. The contract was awarded in June 2024. CalRecycle approved the contractor's Tribal Engagement Plan and assisted with the formation of the Tribal Advisory Panel for the Needs Assessment.

CalRecycle, in partnership with Kauffman and Associates and Tribes throughout California, hosted three hybrid listening sessions. The third and final engagement session was hosted by Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians in July 2025. In August 2025, the draft Needs Assessment and Permitting Guide was circulated to attendees of the listening sessions as well as the Tribal Advisory Panel to solicit feedback. Feedback was accepted via email and open meetings, and private meetings if requested. The final report is expected January 2026. Kauffman and Associates is also preparing a Community Readiness Assessment tool to assist Tribes with identifying the degree of readiness for composting programs and ideal program scale. This document will be finalized in Spring 2026. Both documents will be posted at <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/tribalrelations/compost/>.

### **California's Zero Waste Plan and Public Education and Change Campaign**

In February 2024, California initiated the development of a Zero-Waste Plan and a Public Education and Change Campaign for the Circular Economy and Zero Waste, to be implemented over a two-year period. The Zero-Waste Plan outlines actions to reduce the negative impacts of the materials we produce, use, and discard. Improper management of these materials contributes to climate pollution and other harmful environmental and human health effects, including toxic exposures and hazards.

The draft Zero-Waste Plan is currently available on CalRecycle's dedicated webpage (<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/zerowasteplan/>). The public comment period concluded on

October 17, 2025. The final plan will be submitted to the Legislature on January 1, 2026, and published later that year.

## Disaster Debris Removal Operations

CalRecycle and the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) work in coordination on disaster preparedness efforts. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and/or California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) conducts consultation with interested tribes on disaster debris removal efforts managed by the state. Cal OES then provides information to CalRecycle for operational coordination during the debris removal process. Note that CalRecycle is not assigned to clean up after every disaster recovery mission. If a project is not directly managed by CalRecycle, the local jurisdiction will most likely be responsible for the cleanup.

CalRecycle is working to enhance tribal engagement as part of disaster preparedness and provide additional information in disaster debris brochures for homeowners and tribal communities.

### Current Operations:

CalRecycle is mission tasked by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to conduct private property structural debris and hazard tree removal across four counties including Butte, Kern, Lake and Tehama Counties following the 2024 Statewide Fires. View the [dashboard](https://calrecycle.ca.gov/Disaster/) to learn more about Disaster Debris Removal Operations to date (<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/Disaster/>).

CalOES received communications from Tribes interested in monitoring sensitive areas within the burn scar. CalOES notified CalRecycle of their interest, and CalRecycle followed up to engage interested Tribes and further assist with operational logistics, Tribal Monitoring, and coordination related to the protection of cultural resources.

CalRecycle successfully integrated tribal monitoring for the duration of debris and hazard tree removal operations.

## Priorities for Next Quarter

- CalRecycle will continue to plan the development of a CalRecycle Tribal Consultation Policy to strengthen partnerships, integrate Tribal perspectives, and ensure meaningful engagement on environmental initiatives, supporting tribal sovereignty and sustainability.
- Finalize and publish the Tribal Composting Needs Assessment reports.
- Further development of the California-Mexico Border project. The project focuses on examining waste streams and types in the border region while assessing the

impacts of pollution on local communities, including Tribal Nations. This initiative aims to deepen the understanding of environmental challenges in the area and promote equitable, sustainable solutions.

- Continue the assessment of EPR programs to improve tribal participation.
- Support grants team to increase tribal access and participation in grant programs.

**For more information:**

- Email: [tribalaffairs@calrecycle.ca.gov](mailto:tribalaffairs@calrecycle.ca.gov)