



California Native American Heritage Commission Quarterly Commission Meeting Minutes Open Session

Meeting Date: January 16, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:10 am - 1:32 pm

Meeting Location: East End Complex, 1500 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95814

Room: Auditorium

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Reginald Pagaling, *Chairperson*
Buffy McQuillen, *Vice-Chairperson*
Isaac Bojorquez, *Secretary*
Wayne Nelson, *Parliamentarian*
Bennae Calac
Stanley Rodriguez

STAFF PRESENT

Andrew Alejandro, *Executive Secretary*
Michelle Carr, *Chief Counsel*
Mario Pallari, *Staff Counsel*
Conner Mulligan, *Staff Services Manager I*
Maria Elena Sepulveda, *Office Technician*

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Sara Dutschke

CALL TO ORDER

1. Chairperson Pagaling called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.
2. Roll call – a quorum was established.
3. The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Commissioners and staff were introduced.
4. Commissioner Stanley Rodriguez led the Traditional Opening.

Agenda Items were taken out of order

8. Introduction of Department of Justice Office of Native Americans (Janet K. Bill – Director, Office of Native Americans at California Department of Justice)
9. Introduction of Christine Williams, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Native American and Tribal Affairs at California Department of Justice

ACTION

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. December 11, 2025 – Open Session

Commission Vote: Approve December 11, 2025, Open Session minutes.

Motion: Secretary Bojorquez

Second: Commissioner Rodriguez

Aye: 6; Nay: 0; Abstained: 0

Motion carried.

2. Calendar Dates and Locations for April and July 2026 Commission Meetings

a. Friday, April 17, 2026, and July 17, 2026

Commission Vote: Keep dates of Commission meetings but all locations to be determined (TBD).

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Vice-Chairperson McQuillen

Aye: 6; Nay: 0; Abstained: 0

Motion carried.

3. CSU Systemwide/Campus Repatriation and Oversight Committee Nominations

Staff Counsel Pallari stated that all these candidates have been reviewed by the subcommittee and are recommended. The balancing analysis has been done, and these candidates would not create an imbalance on the committees.

CSU San Francisco

a. Commission to consider the nomination of Abel Gomez, CSU Representative, CSU San Francisco

Commission Vote: Nominate Abel Gomez to CSU San Francisco Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Secretary Bojorquez

Second: Commissioner Nelson

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

CSU Sonoma

b. Commission to consider the nomination of Natasha Medel, Federally Recognized Tribal Representative, CSU Sonoma

Commission Vote: Nominate Natasha Medel to CSU Sonoma Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Vice-Chairperson McQuillen

Second: Commissioner Calac

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

- c. Commission to consider the nomination of James Mestaz, CSU Representative, CSU Sonoma

Commission Vote: Nominate James Mestaz to CSU Sonoma Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Vice-Chairperson McQuillen

Second: Secretary Bojorquez

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

CSU San Bernadino

- d. Commission to consider the nomination of Molly Springer, CSU Representative, CSU San Bernadino

Commission Vote: Nominate Molly Springer to CSU San Bernadino Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Commissioner Nelson

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

CSU Systemwide

- e. Commission to consider the nomination of Radley Davis, Federally Recognized Tribal Representative, CSU Systemwide

Commission Vote: Nominate Radley Davis to CSU Systemwide Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Rodriguez

Second: Secretary Bojorquez

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

4. UC Systemwide/Campus Repatriation and Oversight Committee Nominations

UC Santa Cruz

- a. Commission to consider the nomination of Dr. Tsim Schneider, Federally Recognized Tribal Representative, UC Santa Cruz

Commission Vote: Nominate Dr. Tsim Schneider to UC Santa Cruz Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Vice-Chairperson McQuillen

Second: Commissioner Calac

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

5. California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Office updates regarding AB 389 compliance, including Systemwide Policy Development

Samantha Cypret, the Executive Director for the Office of Tribal Relations for the CSU Chancellor's Office, provided an update on the CSU's progress towards Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) compliance and ongoing implementation of recommendations from the state auditor.

Commissioner Calac brought up the fact that, as an NAHC Commissioner, they get asked by tribes if there are NAGPRA trainings that are available to the public. Executive Director Cypret offered the CSU as a sponsor for that training but does not offer to lead the training as they are not the subject matter expert.

Chairperson Pagaling expressed frustration that we have not heard from the UC system and mentioned that he has spoken to Assemblymember Ramos about getting the UC system on board.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen asked about a funding element for tribes through the UC and CSU system as well as guides on how tribes can access those funds. Executive Director Cypret acknowledged that each CSU campus may have their own way of doing things and that can present obstacles for tribes to receive funding for repatriation efforts. She is working with the CSU leadership office to possibly set up a general fund with her office so that all 22 campuses can utilize that for tribes. She mentioned that for the last two school years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 the system has allocated \$3.7m to go directly to campuses to support their NAGPRA efforts and part of that is earmarked for tribal reimbursement repatriation/reburial costs. But that breaks down to roughly \$200,000 to \$150,000 per campus. Executive Director Cypret also mentioned that they are looking into other funding sources such as direct tribal funding.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen brought up the CSU Systemwide/Campus Repatriation and Oversight Committees, and that the number of campus representatives needed is quite large and through AB389 there is a clause that allows campuses to utilize a tribal representative in place of a campus representative if no campus representative can be found. Vice-Chairperson McQuillen continued explaining the vision for AB389 more as a global office with oversight from the top to provide funding that would assist tribes to meet their repatriation goal. Now that the policy is in place we need to see how effective the policy is while balancing strict timelines with Federal Law. Executive Director Cypret acknowledged that a tribal representative could be seated in lieu of a campus representative and can be utilized in certain instances. But in other instances, for campuses that do not have federally recognized tribes nearby, they struggle to find tribal representatives.

Executive Director Cypret brought back a concern that was raised in a previous meeting that there may be instances where a committee member might not feel comfortable contacting her office directly about an issue. In response to that concern, her office created feedback form on their website that people can submit comments, concerns, and questions about the committees which may be submitted anonymously or they may identify themselves.

Executive Director Cypret noted that all committees have been directed to start meeting, whether they have all positions filled. Her office is advising them to meet even if they only have one committee member because starting sooner rather than later is advised.

Secretary Bojorquez brought up the issue of cultural resources being contaminated by pesticides and the possibility that some CSU collections may have been contaminated. He asked Executive Director Cypret how her office plans on addressing that issue and training tribes on the proper procedure for handling those items. Executive Director Cypret responded by letting the Commission know that they are hoping to have a subcontractor on-site to do the testing prior to handing over the items to tribes. She acknowledges that is a huge cost, each test costs roughly \$40,000 and does not anticipate each campus being able to afford that. But her office is exploring the possibility of creating a contract with a company for the entire CSU system and being able to dispatch them on a case-by-case basis. Commissioners and Executive Director Cypert discussed how to handle contaminated remains and how to communicate with coroners and tribes, especially small tribes.

6. CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations

a. Status of draft CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations

Chief Counsel Carr provided a status update for the draft CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations.

Commissioner Calac wanted clarification if the draft CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations had a clause that states that the document will be reviewed or revised after a certain time. Chief Counsel Carr clarified that review of the document would be a Commission internal policy rather than written into the regulations themselves.

Chairperson Pagaling and Commissioner Calac determined that a separate internal policy would need to be written and that a review period should be written into that document. They will discuss that at a Strategic Planning Subcommittee Meeting.

b. Commissioners to consider adopting CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations

Commission Vote: Commission to adopt CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations and delegate Chief Counsel to re-submit the regulations to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for final approval for filing with the Secretary of State and make any non-substantive changes to the language, if necessary.

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Commissioner Rodriguez

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

Secretary Bojorquez requested clarification on the non-substantive changes to the language portion of the vote, as to what those changes may entail. Chief Counsel Carr stated that non-substantive changes are primarily punctuation or technical.

Break from 11:27am – 11:37am.

7. Draft CalNAGPRA Enforcement Regulations

a. Status of Draft CalNAGPRA Enforcement Regulations

Chief Counsel Carr provided an overview and a status update on the Draft CalNAGPRA Enforcement Regulations.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested some examples of how these Enforcement Regulations would be used. Chief Counsel Carr stated that if an institution is not in compliance with federal NAGPRA and not subject to federal NAGPRA, then it would be subject to CalNAGPRA. The NAHC staff will conduct an internal investigation to determine if the institution is subject to CalNAGPRA and follow the process laid out in the regulations to go forward.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested clarification on the internal process for following through with these complaints and requested an internal document be drafted. Chief Counsel Carr agreed that an internal policy needs to be created.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen asked for clarification on the items that the complaint would include. Chief Counsel Carr stated that they give us the facts or evidence that they have possession or control of the items and each provision of the act that the institution has allegedly failed to comply with. Commission staff will then investigate whether this allegation is founded or not. Commission staff can reach out to both sides, as needed. As well as the tribe(s) that may be affected.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested that the Commission staff create a document on the proper procedure and policy on failure to comply, and how to submit a complaint for the public to view and have it available on the website.

Executive Secretary Alejandre asked Commissioner Calac if a workshop on NAGPRA compliance be something that the Commission would like to do. Commissioner Calac agreed that it would be amenable but also wanted to confirm that this will be presented to tribes.

Vice-Chair McQuillen, Commissioner Calac, and Chief Counsel Carr discussed how tribes will navigate CalNAGPRA vs Federal NAGPRA. Chief Counsel Carr stated that tribes can make allegations simultaneously. Vice-Chairperson McQuillen stated CalNagpra needs to work together with the federal process. Vice-Chairperson McQuillen asked if the NAHC has started to have those conversations with Federal NAGPRA And Chief Counsel Carr answered positively and assured that we have good relationship with the Federal NAGPRA program staff.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen asked for an overview of the Regulations which Chief Counsel Carr provided.

Secretary Bojorquez agreed that a workshop on NAGPRA compliance would be helpful but also discussed the idea of putting the information on the NAHC website.

b. Commission to consider adopting CalNAGPRA Enforcement Regulations

Commission Vote: Adopt the CalNAGPRA Enforcement Regulations.

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Secretary Bojorquez

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

Chairperson Pagaling requested that the Commission review the internal policy at the next Commission meeting.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested clarification on who would be subject to this law and whether that is written in the CalNAGPRA Enforcement Regulations.

- c. Commission to consider authorizing staff to file the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Action with the Office of Administrative Law to begin the formal rulemaking process

Commission Vote: Authorize staff to file the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Action with the OAL to begin the formal rulemaking process.

Motion: Secretary Bojorquez

Second: Commissioner Rodriguez

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

Chief Counsel Carr responded to commissioner questions regarding the one-year OAL process.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested staff to provide clarification, consistency, and process of regulations including timelines and present to the Commission.

Secretary Bojorquez reiterated the request to create an internal policy that coincides with these regulations.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested that the next Commission meeting be in an accessible location and have the public hearing be interactive to the public and consider hybrid type meeting. Commissioner Calac requested funding costs for the different types of meetings.

INFORMATIONAL

10. Draft Contact List Regulations

- a. Roundtable listening sessions and consultations conducted to date

Chief Counsel Carr provided an overview of the roundtable listening sessions and consultations conducted to date on the draft Contact List Regulations.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested that the finalized version of this document be available on the website post January 26, 2026.

- b. Availability of comments received to date

Chief Counsel Carr noted that comments received to date on the draft Contact List Regulations are available on the NAHC website. She also requested clarification on how comments received once the comment and consultation period ends should be shared. Vice-Chairperson McQuillen, Secretary Bojorquez, and Commissioner Calac agreed that posting the draft comments to the website is in the best interest of transparency. Vice Chairperson McQuillen provided some guidance on next steps for the contact list regulations.

11. January 15, 2026, Sacred Lands File Workshop

Commissioner Calac and Secretary Bojorquez gave an overview of the workshop and discussed the idea of having another workshop.

Chief Counsel Carr discussed the idea of having a subcommittee meeting to discuss what topics were brought up during the workshop.

Commissioner Calac with Commissioner Bojorquez stated that changes may need to be made to comment cards for workshops along with possible comments for absent tribes.

Chairperson Pagaling and Commissioner Calac requested an internal policy document be created regarding the Sacred Lands File applications.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen encouraged Commission staff to meet with the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) regarding the overlap and gaps of work on the protection of sacred sites. Commissioner Calac and Secretary Bojorquez agreed that collaboration with OHP and the NAHC needs to happen and provide transparency regarding the process of each entity.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen wanted to discuss records within the NAHC office and safeguarding them. As well as the software being used to house this information. Chief Counsel Carr said that all of that is in progress and the information can be sent over to the Commission.

12. Executive Secretary Report

Executive Secretary Alejandro gave an overview of his onboarding at the NAHC and provided updates on internal processes that he has been overseeing recently. He also provided a report for the Environmental and Cultural Division from October 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, made 14 Most Likely Descendant (MLD) designations, received and completed 1540 NAHC contact list requests, and completed 5039 searches of the Sacred Lands File (SLF). He also provided an update on the 50th Anniversary Planning.

Commissioner Calac asked how many open positions are currently open at the NAHC. Executive Secretary Alejandro stated that there are 13 open positions currently unfilled. Chief Counsel Carr expressed clarified that the unfilled positions will be recruited for as the NAHC's work requires.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen requested that the 5-year Strategic Plan be brought up at the next meeting to get that updated. She also requested that the Tribal Consultation Policy be updated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Laura Miranda, Attorney, representing Pechanga, stated that she agrees with the Commission that an SLF training is needed for the public because there is a lot of confusion around the different dynamics of the SLF. She mentioned that the Sacred Lands File is mentioned in statute in AB130 and she doesn't think that was clear to those who were at the SLF workshop yesterday.

INFORMATIONAL CONTINUED

13. Commissioner Reports

A variety of Commissioners notified the public of upcoming events happening in their communities.

ADJOURNMENT

Commission Vote: Adjourn the January 16, 2026, Commission Meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Rodriguez

Second: Commissioner Calac

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted and approved on behalf of the Native American Heritage Commission.

Reginald Pagaling, *Chairperson*

Isaac Bojorquez, *Secretary*

DRAFT