



Capital Valleys Forum 2026

[Speakers Bios](#)

Agenda

8:30–9:25 AM	55 min	Registration & Coffee Networking Arrival and informal networking.	
9:25–9:40 AM	15 min	Opening Remarks Framing the day: why the capital, why now, and what the Forum is designed to produce.	Capital Valleys Forum
9:40–10:00 AM	20 min	Keynote Climate and Community Impact A talk on community impact potential of solving for place-based challenges.	Sustainable Environmental Design, UC Berkeley, The Triangle
10:00–10:35 AM	35 min	Panel Building the Workforce, Supply Chains & Deployment Lanes for Electrification Deployed projects, trained technicians, local suppliers. A new-economy flywheel from innovation to deployment to workforce.	CalEPIC, DCCM

10:35–10:55 AM	20 min	Fireside Where the Goods Move, the Country Follows: Freight, Ports, and California's Climate Playbook California's 12 ports handle roughly 40% of all containerized imports and 30% of containerized exports in the United States: a freight system whose climate footprint, frontline-community burden, and policy decisions ripple across every state in the country. From clean drayage rules and zero-emission port equipment to hydrogen hubs and the offshore-wind supply chain, what California decides at the dock and on the highway shapes the national playbook. Christine Casey, CalSTA's Deputy Secretary for Freight Policy, sits at the center of that work. In conversation with David Hume, she'll trace the arc from molecular biology to freight policy leadership, unpack what the "as California goes" thesis actually looks like in trucks, trains, and terminals and make the case for why Sacramento is the city quietly moving the country.	CalSTA, The Liquid Grid
10:55–11:10 AM	15 min	Morning Break	
11:10–11:40 AM	30 min	Panel California's Climate Corridor: Regional Ecosystems into a National Export Engine California doesn't have a climate economy, it has climate economies, plural. From San Diego's 925 cleantech establishments to the Central Valley's agri-tech corridors to the Bay Area's venture-backed innovators, California has built interlocking regional ecosystems that collectively power the world's 4th largest economy. But how do we connect these islands of excellence into a unified export machine? This panel convenes architects of California's regional climate infrastructure to explore a critical question: How do we transform California's distributed innovation advantage into deployable solutions that scale beyond our borders, while ensuring prosperity stays home?	Cool Climate Collective, Cleantech San Diego, California Forward, New Energy Nexus

11:40–12:00 PM	20 min	Fireside Where the Money Meets the Cell Roughly three-quarters of the world's lithium-ion batteries are made in China. The U.S. has had effectively zero domestic production of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) cathode material: the chemistry powering everything from EVs to grid storage to home backup. That's not a technology problem, it's a manufacturing and capital problem. And it's the kind of problem California has that capability to solve.	Climate Money, Sparkz, Silicon Valley Bank
12:00–1:10 PM	70 min	Lunch & Structured Networking	
1:10–1:45 PM	35 min	Panel Powering AI Without Breaking the Grid Can we scale AI without scaling its footprint? Beyond PUE/WUE to honest accounting of resource intensity. We explore inference & training data center needs and the work being done to 'play nice'.	CREO, CISCO, Hayzel, Modern Energy
1:45–2:00 PM	15 min	Lightning Can the State combat wildfire cascading risk with existing assets? What would it look like if we could leverage existing state assets to solve for wildfire risk, generate additional state revenue and clean up our energy grid? This provocative keynote will explore a private-market funded initiative for the public good.	California Resilience Plan
2:00–2:35 PM	35 min	Panel The Resilience Premium: Finding Returns in Places That Last How debt markets price resilience directly: green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, tiered pricing — and how sponsors unlock cheaper, longer-term capital.	Climate Money, CalSTRS, CurvePoint Capital, HSBC
2:35–3:10 PM	35 min	Insights Talk When Your Model Breaks: How to Price Tomorrow and Prosper Today Decision frameworks for investing when historical baselines lose predictive power. Scenario logic, leading indicators, and model governance.	Anthos

3:10–3:30 PM	20 min	Afternoon Break	
3:30–3:55 PM	25 min	Panel The Next Sacramento Kings... Angels Sacramento sits 90 miles from the most concentrated pool of risk capital in human history and somehow imports its innovation story anyway. The region has wealth, policy power, two of the most productive economic valleys on Earth flanking it, and a growing bench of operators. So why do local founders still pitch on Sand Hill before they pitch on J Street? Why does Central Valley ag-tech get funded out of Boston before Davis? This panel asks Sacramento's angels a harder question than "what are you investing in?"; it asks why their checks should stay in the 916 at all, and what it would take to make Sacramento fund Sacramento before someone else does.	SacAngels, WexFord Labs, Cool Climate Collective
3:55–4:25 PM	30 min	Fireside The End of Stationarity: What Scales in Water? Our water infrastructure was built for a stable climate that no longer exists. As hydrologic patterns become more volatile, the systems we rely on are struggling to adapt. At the same time, investment in water infrastructure and technology has lagged behind the scale of the challenge. What does it take for water solutions to truly scale? Aquaporo offers one example of a modular, rapidly deployable approach—but where else should we be investing to meet this moment?	West Yost Associates, Aquaporo
4:25–4:45 PM	20 min	Fireside Where the Money Meets the Molecule Infinium turns waste CO₂ and clean electrons into the molecules that move planes, ships, and trucks and, as of earlier this year, into the immersion fluids cooling the AI data center buildout. HSBC has financed the plants making it real. A Sacramento-grown company, a global bank, and a working answer to the question: how do you actually make a molecule bankable?	Infinium, HSBC

4:45–5:10 PM	25 min	Panel Food & Ag: Feeding 40M People on a Warming Planet A look at the strategies and solutions to deploy the regenerative agriculture, supply chain resilience, ag-tech innovation in the Central Valley, and how we take into consideration farmer livelihood as part of the equation from the foundational level.	CleanStart, ATOA Carbon, Alga Bio, NorCal SBDC
5:10–5:20 PM	10 min	Keynote Closing Synthesis What emerged, what is next, and what the room commits to carry forward.	Capital Valleys Forum
5:20–6:30 PM	70 min	Networking Wrap Networking Period 'til Wrap	

About the organizers:

Cool Climate Collective

Combined investor-operator platform & ecosystem that provides funding and capacity building functions.

emrgnce

A platform to catalyze emerging trends, markets and technologies for the prosperity of communities.