

Working Lands & Water Sector Profile

*One of Five Priority Sectors for the South
Central Coast under California Jobs First*

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Key Findings

1. **The Working Lands and Water sector represents a high-priority investment opportunity for the South Central Coast (SCC).** With more than 85,400 workers and a \$19 billion contribution to gross regional product, the sector is a major driver of regional employment and economic output. It also offers accessible entry points into the workforce, making it especially important for expanding economic opportunity across the region. As employers anticipate continued employment growth over both the next 12 months and the next three years, targeted investments in training, career pathways, and employer partnerships can help ensure the region is prepared to meet future workforce demand.
2. **Automation is likely to impact priority occupations broadly across the Working Lands and Water sector.** Nearly all (87%) of the sector's priority occupations are moderately to highly affected by automation. Community colleges and other training providers must continue to strengthen industry partnerships to adequately respond to shifts in occupational demand and changing work activities driven by automation. Ongoing curriculum updates, employer feedback loops, and incumbent worker upskilling will be crucial to maintaining Working Lands and Water workers' readiness.
3. **Community colleges can play a key role in supporting job readiness, applied learning, and short-term upskilling for Working Lands and Water occupations.** While employer interest in apprenticeships, internships, bootcamps, and job-readiness programs is high, only about half of the surveyed employers (48%) report partnering with community colleges. This gap suggests an opportunity to better connect employer demand for flexible training models to community college-led workforce pathways, including short-term agriculture technology (AgTech) training and demonstration projects that expose students, workers, and local farmers to emerging technologies.
4. **Agricultural Equipment Operators should represent the central focus of the region's workforce strategy and community college prioritization efforts.** This occupation has a large employment base, strong regional demand, and direct relevance to both AgTech adoption and Agricultural Production. Agricultural Equipment Operators also offer moderate advancement potential, making the occupation an accessible pathway into higher-wage careers. Prioritizing occupations that are both high-demand and mobility-enhancing represents one of the region's most immediate workforce development opportunities.

Other important occupations include Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels; Food Science Technicians; Industrial Machinery Mechanics; Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators; and Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers.

Introduction

This Working Lands and Water Report is part of a larger series that explores “Bet” and “Accelerate” sectors in the South Central Coast (SCC) region, which includes San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Northern Los Angeles Counties.

Under California Jobs First, which presents a comprehensive approach to advancing the state’s economy, Working Lands and Water is both a “Bet” and “Accelerate” sector due to its projected growth and strategic importance to the region’s innovation ecosystem. This designation signals state-level commitment to expanding Working Lands and Water industries and workforce pipelines.

This report explores opportunities and challenges in the SCC Working Lands and Water sector. However, some data limitations exist, as North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes lack granularity and may not accurately reflect emerging industries in AgTech, bioeconomy, and blue technologies. A full list of NAICS codes included in the Working Lands and Water definition is available in Appendix A.

Sector Landscape

Working Lands and Water is both a “Bet” and an “Accelerate” sector in the SCC region, reflecting its dual role as an area of active investment and innovation and as a source of projected employment growth. The region has significant local research and development and educational assets, including the Cal Poly Strawberry Center, the Cal Poly Agricultural Research Institute, and the UC Santa Barbara Bren School of Environmental Science and Management. Additionally, the Port of Hueneme, located in Ventura County, is the fourth-largest port in California and the sixteenth-largest in the nation.

However, the sector faces several challenges to workforce attraction, retention, and planning across both agricultural and water-related industries. In agriculture, employment remains concentrated in lower-wage traditional roles, with an average regional wage of \$52,624, well below the region’s average of \$70,054.¹ Persistent labor shortages have also been intensified by recent federal immigration enforcement, while water scarcity continues to disrupt agricultural production and growing cycles. Federal tariffs and policy uncertainty also affect trade conditions and port activity, creating additional pressure across the broader Working Lands and Water sector.

The SCC has more than 85,400 Working Lands and Water jobs as of 2025 that contributed \$19 billion to gross regional product in 2025. The concentration of workers employed in the SCC Working Lands and Water sector is more than twice the national average. Local employers include Taylor Farms, Mission Produce, Nereid Biomaterials, and TRIC Robotics.

¹ JobsEQ. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2025Q3.

Industry Landscape

The Working Lands and Water sector is classified into eight industries:

- **Agricultural Production**, including berry farming, vegetable farming, and poultry production.
- **AgTech and Farm Equipment**, including farm machinery and equipment manufacturing.
- **Bioeconomy**, including sawmills and reconstituted wood products.
- **Blue Economy/Tech**, including aquaculture, marine fishing, and shipbuilding.
- **Food Processing**, including food manufacturing.
- **Land Management**, including landscaping services, urban planning, and rural development.
- **Research & Development** of new technologies relevant to Working Lands and Water.
- **Water Economy**, including water supply and irrigation systems.

Agricultural Production workers represent nearly two-thirds (65%) of the region's Working Lands and Water workforce. The next largest industry is Food Processing, representing 14% of the Working Lands and Water workforce, followed by Land Management at 12%, Research & Development at 4%, Blue Economy at 4%, and Water Economy at 1%. AgTech and Farm Equipment, and Bioeconomy, each represent less than 1% of the region's Working Lands and Water workforce.

The Blue Economy/Tech industry offers the highest salaries in the region's Working Lands and Water sector, at \$110,700 annually. Also offering high wages is the Water Economy, with an annual average wage of \$101,876, and Research & Development in Working Lands and Water, at \$87,600.² While these industries offer high wages, all have shed jobs over the last five years. Continuing investment and regional focus on high-paying sectors will be crucial to maintaining high-wage opportunities in Working Lands and Water.

Food Processing, Land Management, and Agricultural Production experienced the highest rate of job growth in the last five years. Food processing led growth, at 22%, with Land Management at 13% and Agricultural Production at 8%.³ However, wages across all three industries fall below the region's annual average. This underscores the need to maintain a reliable pipeline of workers within these industries, while recognizing that many of these jobs should function as on-ramps to higher-wage, more sustainable careers rather than endpoints in the regional economy.

Demand Expectations

Working Lands and Water employers predict growth. Over half (56%) of surveyed employers predict headcount growth over the next 12 months, with 25% anticipating a 10% or higher increase. Expectations are even more optimistic over the three-year time frame, with three in five (61%) of employers predicting headcount growth, and almost a third (36%) anticipating growth over 10%.

² JobsEQ. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2025Q3.

³ JobsEQ. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2025Q3.

Stakeholder interviews suggest that regional job growth in the near term will be shaped by technological change and efforts to strengthen local markets. As AgTech adoption expands, demand is also expected to grow for workers to support more advanced production systems. At the same time, automation and AI are elevating the role of workers fluent in data analysis for port planning, while initiatives to increase demand for local produce are creating a greater need for marketing and supply chain professionals.

Occupational Findings

Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers, Agricultural Equipment Operators, and Packing and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders represent the highest-employment key occupations regionally in Working Lands and Water. As of the third quarter of 2025, Working Lands and Water in the SCC employed over 6,000 Landscaping and Groundskeeping workers, nearly 2,150 Agricultural Equipment Operators, and over 1,300 Packing and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders.⁴ These occupations, which participate in the Agriculture Production, AgTech, and Food Processing industries, help guide regional priorities in workforce development. Other high-employment occupations include General and Operations Managers, Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators, and Management Analysts.

As the region's Working Lands and Water sector evolves, emerging roles may warrant more targeted workforce development efforts. Continued adoption of AgTech and automation is expected to increase the importance of Agricultural Engineers and Farm Equipment Technicians, who can support more advanced and technology-enabled production systems. These same trends are also likely to elevate demand for Data Scientists in both ports and agriculture, where data can improve planning, operations, and resource management. At the same time, efforts to increase local consumption of regional agricultural products will require Marketing and Supply Chain Analysts who understand the specific needs of the Working Lands and Water sector.

Job Advancement

More than half (55%) of priority Working Lands and Water occupations offer high wages or strong advancement potential, underscoring the role these jobs can play in supporting economic mobility. Thirty-one occupations were selected as priority Working Lands and Water occupations due to their importance in the sector's activities, high employment levels, and relevance to the region (see full occupation list in Appendix A).

⁴ JobsEQ. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2025Q3.

Eleven of these occupations already offer high wages and are not included in job advancement metrics because they are considered top-tier roles.⁵ Six of the remaining occupations offer strong advancement potential, including:

- Biological Technicians;
- Chemical Technicians;
- Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians;
- Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters;
- Sailors and Marine Oilers;
- Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators.⁶

Automation

Most priority Working Lands and Water occupations (84%) are expected to be moderately to highly affected by automation. Fifteen occupations are moderately automatable, while twelve are highly automatable.⁷ The twelve highly automatable occupations include:

- Agricultural Equipment Operators;
- Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels;
- Food Batchmakers;
- Industrial Machinery Mechanics;
- Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators;
- Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers;
- Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders;
- Sailors and Marine Oilers;
- Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood;
- Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas;
- Software Developers;
- Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers.

As automation changes the tasks, tools, and skill requirements associated with these occupations, training programs will need to maintain close partnerships with employers to ensure workers are prepared for evolving industry needs and potential shifts in demand.

⁵ These occupations include Agricultural Engineers; Mechanical Engineers; General and Operations Managers; Management Analysts; Landscape Architects; Petroleum Engineers; Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels; Civil Engineers; Industrial Production Managers; Software Developers; Chemists.

⁶ BW Research. Job Advancement Index, 2026. The Job Advancement Index classifies occupations into three categories based on workers' potential to advance to higher-paying job opportunities. These high advancement potential occupations are classified as Category 1 occupations that are most likely to provide higher-paying job opportunities. See Appendix D for more details.

⁷ BW Research. Job Automation Index, 2026. The Job Automation Index classifies occupations into three levels based on the proportion of skills and tasks that can be automated within a particular occupation. These highly automatable occupations are classified as Level 3 occupations that are most likely to experience automation and AI-related employment effects. See Appendix D for more details.

Five priority occupations are among the least affected by automation:

- Fishing and Hunting Workers;
- General and Operations Managers;
- Landscape Architects;
- Management Analysts;
- Petroleum Engineers.

Apart from Fishing and Hunting Workers, these occupations generally require a bachelor's degree at entry, suggesting that entry-level occupations are most likely to be affected by automation in Working Lands and Water.

Skills

Most employers report some changes in the skills and abilities required for Working Lands and Water workers due to evolving technologies, market conditions, or expectations.⁸ At least two-thirds of employers reported considerable skill changes for the following occupations:

- Agricultural Engineers;
- Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators;
- Logging Equipment Operations.

As with automation, occupations undergoing significant skill changes require workforce development organizations and trainers to maintain close connections with employers and ensure that curricula and training pathways reflect industry needs.

Executive interviews suggest that technical skills needed in the Working Lands and Water sector are shifting as agriculture and port planning become increasingly technology enabled. Wider adoption of cloud-based data systems, analytics, and AgTech will spur demand for stronger foundational STEM and data analysis skills. Farmers adopting transitional farming practices may also need more hands-on training to effectively deploy new AgTech tools in the field.

Beyond technical skills, stakeholders identified gaps in regulatory communication, relationship management, and marketing, particularly as the sector navigates policy requirements, strengthens partnerships, and seeks to boost demand for locally produced food.

Training Landscape

Surveyed Working Lands and Water employers reported a strong interest in training programs to strengthen workforce pipelines. Nearly all employers expressed interest in apprenticeship programs, with 95% indicating they were very or somewhat interested and more than half (57%) reporting they

⁸ Since survey responses were limited, these findings should be interpreted directionally rather than as strict quantitative findings.

were very interested. Interest was also high for job readiness programs at 92%, and for internship and mentorship programs, at 90% each.

About half (48%) of respondents reported partnering with community colleges to recruit, hire, and train workers. Partnership rates are higher for community colleges than for unions, workforce development boards, and nonprofits or community organizations; however, they lag four-year colleges (59%) and high school, technical, or vocational schools (56%).

Findings suggest that employers are receptive to training partnerships, but that opportunities remain to better align high-interest training models with existing education and workforce relationships. Community colleges already serve as an important partner to many Working Lands and Water employers, positioning them to play a larger role in expanding apprenticeships, internships, bootcamps, and job readiness programs that respond directly to employer needs. This role could include short-term upskilling in emerging AgTech tools, as well as campus-based demonstration projects that support innovation and provide agricultural students hands-on experience with new technologies.

Training Inventory

The SCC offers 353 Working Lands and Water training programs.⁹ Of these, 211, or 58% are offered by community colleges. Training opportunities are distributed throughout the region's counties. Ventura County offers the most training opportunities, with 120 programs, followed by Santa Barbara County with 104, San Luis Obispo County with 70, and Northern Los Angeles County with 59.

Available training opportunities span chemistry, agricultural science, engineering, and related disciplines, with community colleges offering both entry-level preparation for these fields and foundational coursework for students seeking to transfer to a four-year university. Community colleges also offer shorter-term certificates in areas such as horticulture, wastewater systems, marine diving, land surveying, agricultural equipment, and farm management, supporting a range of workforce needs across the sector.

Several priority occupations expected to experience significant skill changes are supported by strong regional community college training capacity. General and Operations Managers have the largest community college program footprint, with 38 programs across the region. Software Developers have 33 programs, while Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers have 21, Mechanical Engineers have 16, and Landscape Architects have 15. All these occupations, aside from General and Operations Managers, are expected to undergo significant skill change, underscoring the importance of maintaining alignment between existing training programs and evolving industry needs.

Three priority occupations with high wages or advancement potential remain underserved. Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters; along with Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels; have no identified community college training programs in the region, while Chemical Technicians have only one. These gaps suggest an opportunity for community colleges to strengthen pathways into high-value Working

⁹ Training inventory reflects major public institutions and a sample of private and union programs and does not constitute a comprehensive list of all providers in the region.

Lands and Water occupations through aligned coursework, pre-apprenticeship models, transfer pathways, and employer partnerships that help students access careers with stronger wages and advancement potential.

Community College Prioritization

Agricultural Equipment Operators represent the highest-priority occupation for community college development due to their large employment footprint, advancement potential, and strategic importance to the Working Lands and Water sector. This occupation employs over 2,000 workers in the region and requires less than a four-year degree for entry.

Medium-priority occupations include:

- Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels;
- Food Science Technicians;
- Industrial Machinery Mechanics;
- Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and Systems Operators;
- Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers.

These occupations have moderate demand of over 100 workers in the region, moderate-to-high advancement potential, require less than a four-year degree at entry, and play key roles in the Working Lands and Water sector.

Farm Equipment Technicians are an emerging occupation for community college focus, cited by stakeholders as an emerging short- to medium-term hiring need. These opportunities, however, are entry-level positions requiring access to higher-wage career pathways.

Key Constraints to Workforce Development

While the SCC has strong Working Lands and Water assets, several constraints may limit the impact of workforce development efforts. Low wages, high cost of living, and recent immigration enforcement challenges make it difficult to attract and retain workers in entry-level roles, particularly in Agricultural Production and other lower-wage industries. At the same time, limited visibility of higher-wage Working Lands and Water careers constrains the talent pipeline, especially for higher-wage Blue Economy roles that are growing more slowly than traditional agricultural occupations.

These challenges are further shaped by uneven access to emerging agricultural technologies among local farmers. While technology adoption can be constrained by hesitation to transition from established farming practices, stakeholders emphasized that in the SCC, the more immediate barrier is often financial: many farmers lack the capital needed to purchase, test, and integrate modern farming technologies. Without broader access to these tools, demand for the workers who install, maintain, and support AgTech systems may grow more slowly than the technology's long-term potential suggests.

Together, these dynamics underscore the need for workforce strategies that both stabilize the entry-level workforce and build clearer pathways into higher-wage, higher-growth opportunities across the sector.

Recommendations

The Working Lands and Water sector offers strong opportunities to advance climate-resilient agriculture and productive farmland and coastlines while supporting the core mission of California's community colleges: to advance economic growth through accessible workforce training and career education.

Regional recommendations to facilitate workforce opportunities in the Working Lands and Water sector include:

- **Coordinate regional advisory structures to align training with employer needs.** Regional partners should use existing advisory groups, employer councils, and sector partnerships to share labor market insights, reduce duplication, and ensure that new or expanded programs reflect the needs of Working Lands and Water employers. This coordination is especially important as technology adoption, regulatory requirements, and climate resilience needs change the skills required across agriculture, water, and marine-related industries.
- **Strengthen K-12 engagement to increase awareness of Working Lands and Water careers.** Earlier exposure can help students better understand the range of opportunities across agricultural production, food systems, water and wastewater, land management, ports, and marine systems. Regional partners should prioritize career exploration, dual enrollment, work-based learning, and employer engagement strategies that present these fields as technology-enabled, climate-relevant, and connected to long-term advancement opportunities.
- **Expand access for nontraditional learners and incumbent workers.** Many entry-level Working Lands and Water roles face recruitment and retention challenges due to low wages, high cost of living, language barriers, and limited access to training. Regional partners should strengthen outreach, English-language supports, flexible scheduling, transportation assistance, and other wraparound services to help farmworkers, adult learners, and other nontraditional students move into higher-wage career pathways.

In addition to the region-wide recommendations, there are various opportunities for community colleges specifically to best support Working Lands and Water workforce growth:

- **Scale high-value programs aligned with in-demand occupations.** Community colleges should expand programs in industrial machinery, agricultural equipment, water and wastewater treatment, and related technical fields that align with current employer demand and can adapt to emerging needs. These programs can support both immediate hiring needs and longer-term pathways into maintenance, technician, operations, and supervisory roles.
- **Reposition agricultural and food systems programs to showcase higher-wage opportunities in Working Lands and Water.** Colleges can help address negative perceptions of the sector by highlighting the role of agriculture, food systems, and land management in climate resilience, technology adoption, sustainability, and regional economic development. Repositioning these programs around innovation, resilience, and career mobility may help attract students who might not otherwise see Working Lands and Water as a viable or desirable career pathway.

- **Expand work-based learning and applied research opportunities.** Colleges should strengthen internships, short-term credentials, job-readiness programs, and on-campus demonstration projects that provide students with hands-on experience with sector-relevant tools and technologies. These models can help close foundational skills gaps across the Working Lands and Water sector while building a stronger pipeline of skilled workers.
- **Build AgTech training capacity to support local technology adoption.** As AgTech expands, community colleges have an opportunity to train technicians who can install, maintain, troubleshoot, and support emerging technologies used by local farms and agricultural businesses. Colleges can also use demonstration projects and employer partnerships to help farmers better understand and test new technologies, particularly where adoption is constrained by cost, limited technical capacity, or uncertainty about return on investment.

Appendix A: NAICS Industry Definition

Classification	Industry	NAICS	Description
Primary	Agricultural Production	111120	Oilseed except Soybean Farming
		111130	Dry Pea and Bean Farming
		111140	Wheat Farming
		111150	Corn Farming
		111160	Rice Farming
		111191	Oilseed and Grain Combination Farming
		111199	All Other Grain Farming
		111211	Potato Farming
		111219	Other Vegetable except Potato and Melon Farming
		111310	Orange Groves
		111320	Citrus except Orange Groves
		111331	Apple Orchards
		111332	Grape Vineyards
		111333	Strawberry Farming
		111334	Berry except Strawberry Farming
		111335	Tree Nut Farming
		111336	Fruit and Tree Nut Combination Farming
		111339	Other Noncitrus Fruit Farming
		111411	Mushroom Production
		111419	Other Food Crops Grown Under Cover
		111910	Tobacco Farming
		111920	Cotton Farming
		111930	Sugarcane Farming
		111940	Hay Farming
		111991	Sugar Beet Farming
		111992	Peanut Farming
		111998	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming
		112111	Beef Cattle Ranching and Farming
		112112	Cattle Feedlots
		112120	Dairy Cattle and Milk Production
		112210	Hog and Pig Farming
		112310	Chicken Egg Production
		112320	Broilers and Other Meat Type Chicken Production
		112330	Turkey Production
		112340	Poultry Hatcheries
		112390	Other Poultry Production
		112410	Sheep Farming
		112420	Goat Farming

Classification	Industry	NAICS	Description
Primary		113110	Timber Tract Operations
		113210	Forest Nurseries and Gathering of Forest Products
		113310	Logging
		115112	Soil Preparation Planting and Cultivating
		115113	Crop Harvesting Primarily by Machine
		115114	Postharvest Crop Activities except Cotton Ginning
		115115	Farm Labor Contractors and Crew Leaders
		115116	Farm Management Services
		115210	Support Activities for Animal Production
		115310	Support Activities for Forestry
		325311	Nitrogenous Fertilizer Manufacturing
		325314	Fertilizer Manufacturing
		325320	Pesticide and Other Agricultural Chemical Manufacturing
	Agtech and Farm Equipment	333111	Farm Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing
	Bioeconomy	321113	Sawmills
		321219	Reconstituted Wood Products
		322110	Pulp Mills
		322120	Paper Mills
		322130	Paperboard Mills
	Land Management	561730	Landscaping Services
		925120	Administration of Urban Planning and Community and Rural Development
	Blue Economy/Tech	112511	Finfish Farming and Fish Hatcheries
		112512	Shellfish Farming
		112519	Other Aquaculture
		114111	Finfish Fishing
		114112	Shellfish Fishing
		114119	Other Marine Fishing
		336611	Ship Building and Repairing
		336612	Boat Building
Secondary	Water Economy	221310	Water Supply and Irrigation Systems
		333310	Commercial and Service Industry Machinery Manufacturing
		333914	Measuring, Dispensing, and Other Pumping Equipment Manufacturing
	Food Processing	311111	Dog and Cat Food Manufacturing
		311119	Other Animal Food Manufacturing
		311211	Flour Milling
		311212	Rice Milling
		311213	Malt Manufacturing
		311221	Wet Corn Milling and Starch Manufacturing
		311224	Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing

Classification	Industry	NAICS	Description
Secondary	Food Processing	311225	Fats and Oils Refining and Blending
		311230	Breakfast Cereal Manufacturing
		311313	Beet Sugar Manufacturing
		311314	Cane Sugar Manufacturing
		311340	Nonchocolate Confectionery Manufacturing
		311351	Chocolate and Confectionery Manufacturing from Cacao Beans
		311352	Confectionery Manufacturing from Purchased Chocolate
		311411	Frozen Fruit Juice and Vegetable Manufacturing
		311412	Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing
		311421	Fruit and Vegetable Canning
		311422	Specialty Canning
		311423	Dried and Dehydrated Food Manufacturing
		311511	Fluid Milk Manufacturing
		311512	Creamery Butter Manufacturing
		311513	Cheese Manufacturing
		311514	Dry Condensed and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing
		311520	Ice Cream and Frozen Dessert Manufacturing
		311611	Animal except Poultry Slaughtering
		311612	Meat Processed from Carcasses
		311613	Rendering and Meat Byproduct Processing
		311615	Poultry Processing
		311710	Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging
		311811	Retail Bakeries
		311812	Commercial Bakeries
		311813	Frozen Cakes Pies and Other Pastries Manufacturing
		311821	Cookie and Cracker Manufacturing
		311824	Dry Pasta Dough and Flour Mixes Manufacturing
		311830	Tortilla Manufacturing
		311911	Roasted Nuts and Peanut Butter Manufacturing
		311919	Other Snack Food Manufacturing
		311920	Coffee and Tea Manufacturing
		311930	Flavoring Syrup and Concentrate Manufacturing
		311941	Mayonnaise Dressing and Other Prepared Sauce Manufacturing
		311942	Spice and Extract Manufacturing
		311991	Perishable Prepared Food Manufacturing
		311999	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing
		312111	Soft Drink Manufacturing
		312112	Bottled Water Manufacturing
		312120	Breweries
		312130	Wineries

Classification	Industry	NAICS	Description
Secondary	Food Processing	312140	Distilleries
	R&D	541380	Testing Laboratories and Services
		541690	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services
		541990	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
	Blue Economy/Tech	211120	Crude Petroleum Extraction
		211130	Natural Gas Extraction
		212321	Construction Sand and Gravel Mining
		212322	Industrial Sand Mining
		213111	Drilling Oil and Gas Wells
		213112	Support Activities for Oil and Gas Operations
		541360	Geophysical Surveying and Mapping Services
		441222	Boat Dealers
		487210	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation, Water
		713930	Marinas
		483111	Deep Sea Freight Transportation
		483112	Deep Sea Passenger Transportation
		483113	Coastal and Great Lakes Freight Transportation
		483114	Coastal and Great Lakes Passenger Transportation
		488310	Port and Harbor Operations
		488320	Marine Cargo Handling
		488390	Other Support Activities for Water Transportation
	Land Management	541620	Environmental Consulting Services

Appendix B: Priority Occupations

Industry	SOC	Description
Agricultural Production	45-2011	Agricultural Inspectors
	45-2091	Agricultural Equipment Operators
	53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators
Agtech and Farm Equipment	17-2021	Agricultural Engineers
	17-2141	Mechanical Engineers
	49-3041	Farm Equipment Mechanics and Service Technicians
	51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
Bioeconomy	45-4022	Logging Equipment Operators
	45-4023	Log Graders and Scalers
	51-7041	Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood
Land Management	11-1021	General and Operations Managers
	13-1111	Management Analysts
	17-1012	Landscape Architects
	37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers
Blue Economy/Tech	17-2171	Petroleum Engineers
	45-3031	Fishing and Hunting Workers
	47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas
	53-5011	Sailors and Marine Oilers
	53-5021	Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels
Water Economy	17-2051	Civil Engineers
	47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
	51-8031	Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators
Food Processing	11-3051	Industrial Production Managers
	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
	51-3092	Food Batchmakers
	51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders
R&D	15-1252	Software Developers
	19-2031	Chemists
	19-4013	Food Science Technicians
	19-4021	Biological Technicians
	19-4031	Chemical Technicians

Appendix C: Working Lands and Water Employer Survey Methodology

Method	Online Survey (Email and Panel Respondents)
Universe	8,113 establishments in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, and Los Angeles Counties
Number of Respondents	123 total completes by firms in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, and Los Angeles Counties
Average Length	Online Survey – 17 minutes
Field Dates	April 15, 2026 through May 11, 2026

Appendix D: Data Sources

Data Element	Data Source
Sector Employment	United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2025.
Sector Wages	
Occupational Employment	United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2025.
Occupational Wages	
Job Advancement	BW Research. Job Advancement Index, 2026. BW's Job Advancement Index measures workers' potential to advance to higher-paying job opportunities using longitudinal worker advancement data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) (2000-2025). Advancement potential is not applicable for occupations already paying high wages. Category 1 occupations are most likely to provide higher-paying job opportunities. Category 2 occupations are somewhat likely to provide higher-paying job opportunities. Category 3 occupations are the least likely to provide higher-paying job opportunities.
Job Automation	BW Research. Job Automation Index, 2026. BW's Job Automation Index measures the proportion of skills and tasks that can be automated within a particular occupation using detailed knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) and work activity data from O*NET OnLine, 30.0 Database (2025). Level 1 occupations are the least likely to experience automation and AI-related employment effects. Level 2 occupations are somewhat likely to experience automation and AI-related employment effects. Level 3 occupations are most likely to experience automation and AI-related employment effects.
Employer Demand Expectations	BW Research. Regional Employer Survey, 2026.
Skills Change Expectations	
Employer Partnerships	
Stakeholder Insights	BW Research. Executive Interviews, 2026.
Training Inventory	BW Research. Regional Training Inventory, 2026.