



CALIFORNIA LAND RECYCLING CONFERENCE

Imagine | Innovate | Implement
September 29 – October 1, 2026 | Foster City

NEW TO BROWNFIELDS:

DECIPHERING THE ##@\$! JARGON



OFFICE OF BROWNFIELDS
Department of Toxic Substances Control - Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities Initiative



CENTER FOR CREATIVE
LAND RECYCLING
RECLAIM. CONNECT. TRANSFORM.

SPEAKERS



DEVYN RAINWATER
Center for Creative Land
Recycling



LAUREN GHAZIKHANIAN
Center for Creative Land
Recycling



ANTHONY ROSAS
California DTSC

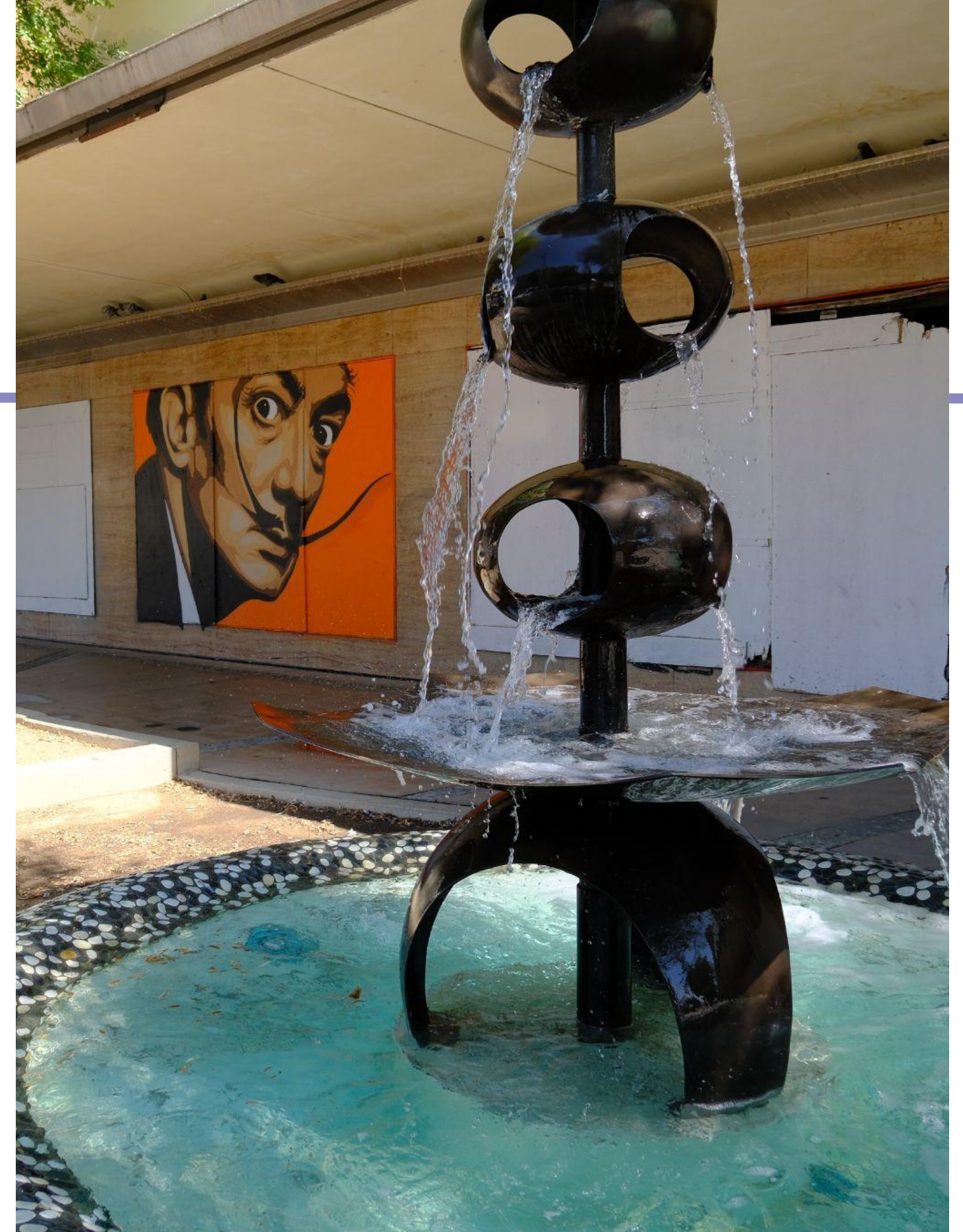
TODAY'S TOPICS OF DISCUSSION (TTOD)

PART ONE: Let's Get into It

PART TWO: The Acronym
Ecosystem in Region 9

PART THREE: Strategies for
Communicating Beyond Jargon

CLOSING + ACTIVITY WINNERS



Public art + fountain in Fresno, CA

**Have you ever nodded
along in a meeting while
frantically Googling an
ACRONYM?**

**Has trying to
pronounce the term
ASTSWMO ever
made you sweat?**

**Has an ACRONYM ever
personally embarrassed
you or made you
question your expertise?**

**Do you know what this
means?**



AAI

Or this?



CERCLA

Or how about these?

DTSC

SWRCB

RWQCB

CDBG

MARC

TIF

Maybe you DO!

But do your colleagues?

Does your client?

**Your grant writer? Or
your grant reviewer?**

They might just see this...

vcp
eifd tif
astswmo dtsc ceqa
ust VOCS calepa
marc rwqcb rec
rlf npl cercla esa swrcb
sara carb rcra aai
nepa

How many of you are NEW to Brownfields work?

Acronyms are useful but can quickly dilute meaning and lead to confusion.

Session Objectives:

1. Deconstruct key R9 and CA acronyms in brownfield work
2. Understand the brownfields meaning behind them
3. Learn practical strategies for communicating them without overwhelming stakeholders



Acronym Utopia! (park in Oregon)

ACRONYM ACTIVITY 1

BROWNFIELD JARGON BINGO

Each participant has one Bingo card with all the acronyms that we will be naming during this session. Draw an **X** over each acronym that you hear *from a presenter* during this session.

First one to bingo, raise your hand!

Bonus prize if you can write out what each acronym stands for on your paper!



ACRONYM ACTIVITY 2

ACRONYM-DENSE SENTENCE

Scan the QR code to submit the most acronym-dense yet grammatically and contextually coherent sentence relating to brownfields redevelopment that you can. Organizers will be reviewing submissions throughout the session and will announce a winner at the end.

You may submit a (legible) sentence via an index card on your table instead of using the online form.

- *Only 2 commas are allowed in your sentence.*
- *All acronyms must be real and related to brownfields.*



TELL ‘EM WHAT THEY’VE WON

BROWNFIELD REUSE PUZZLE



CCLR TUPPERWARE

ACRONYM CATEGORIES IN REGION 9 + THEIR CONNECTIONS

POLICY/LAW

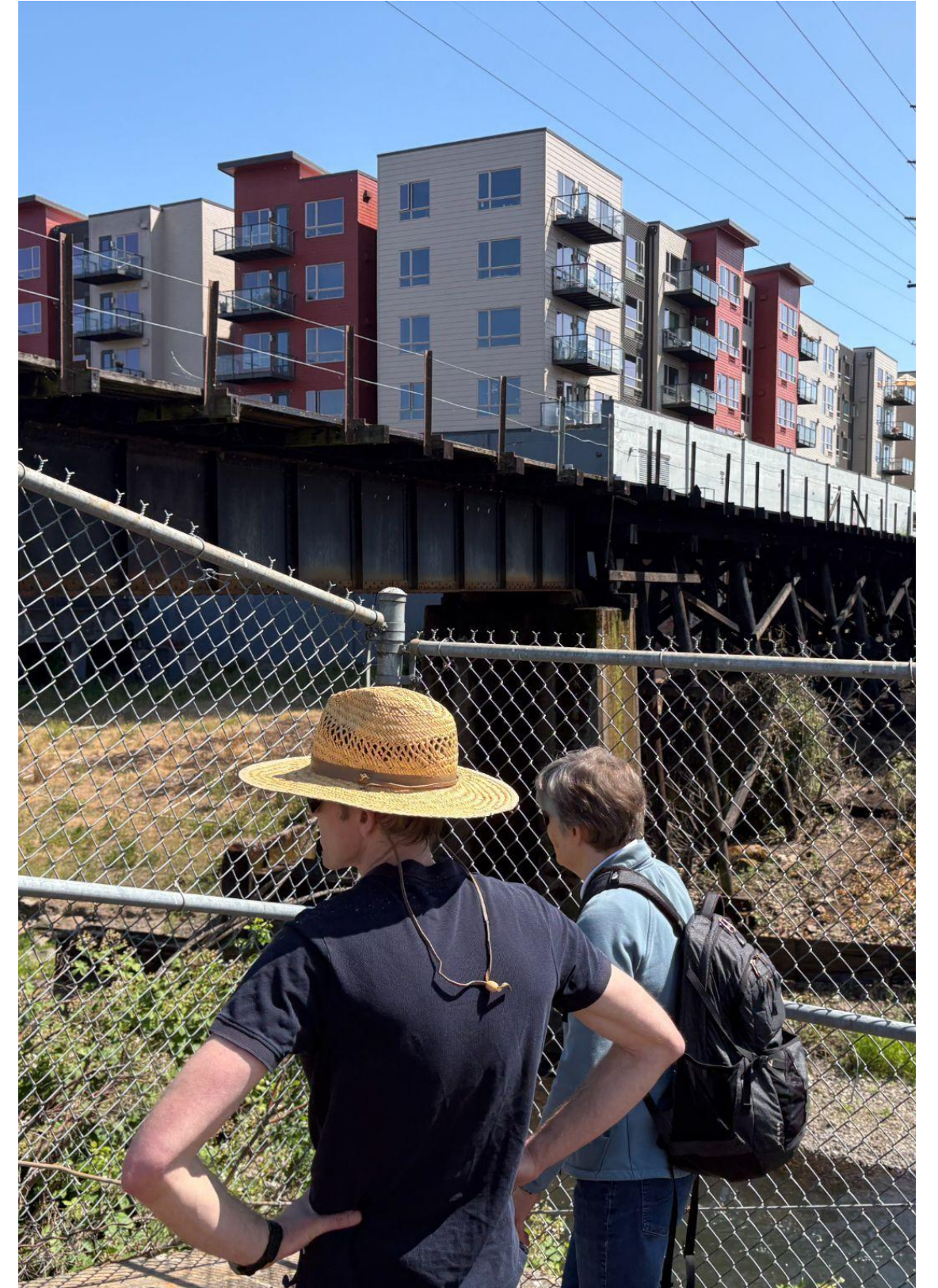
**FEDERAL, STATE,
LOCAL AGENCIES**

**FUNDING
RESOURCES**

**ORGANIZATIONS +
INDUSTRY GROUPS**

**TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE
RESOURCES**

ASSESSMENT AND CLEANUP



ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

POLICY/LAW

Federal Policy:

- **CERCLA**: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- **RCRA**: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- **EPCRA**: the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act
- **TSCA**: Toxic Substances Control Act
- **NPL**: National Priorities List
- **NEPA**: National Environmental Policy Act

CA Local Policy considerations:

- **CEQA**: California Environmental Quality Act



SPOTLIGHT

CERCLA: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AGENCIES

Federal Agencies:

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

- OLEM: Office of Land and Emergency Management
- OBLR: Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization
- OSRE: Office of Site Remediation Enforcement

State Agencies:

California:

- DTSC: Department of Toxic Substances Control
- SWRCB: State Water Resources Control Board

Nevada:

- NDEP: Nevada Department of Environmental Protection

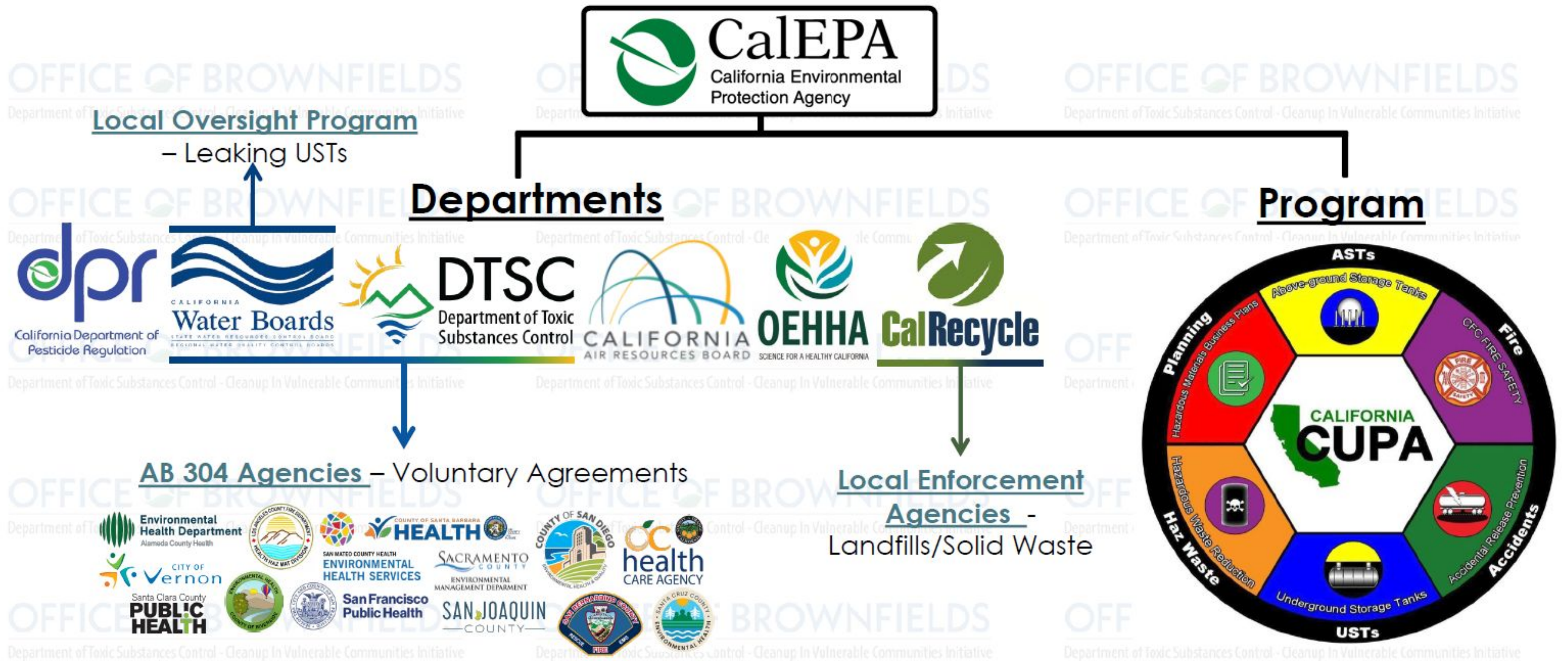
Arizona:

- ADEQ: Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Hawai'i:

- HDOH: Hawai'i Department of Health
- HEER: Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response

The California Environmental Regulatory Structure



ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AGENCIES

cont'd!

Environmental Agencies in the *Pacific Islands:*

Guam:

- GEPA: Guam Environmental Protection Agency

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI):

- CNMI BECQ: Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

American Samoa:

- ASEPA: American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency

Local Agency terms:

- CBO: Community-Based Organization
- CDC: Community Development Corporation
- CLT: Community Land trust
- COG: Council of Governments
- HRA: Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
- BAC: Brownfields Advisory Committee
- CAG: Community Advisory Group

ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

ORGANIZATIONS + INDUSTRY GROUPS

National Tribal Groups:

- TWAR SC: Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee
- TWARP: Tribal Waste and Response Program
- ITEP: Institute for Tribal and Environmental Professionals
- ROTCs: Regional Tribal Operation Committees

National Organizations:

- GWUSA: Groundwork USA
- SGA: Smart Growth America
- NBC: National Brownfields Coalition
- ASTSWMO: Association of State and



SPOTLIGHT

GWUSA, CCLR, and SGA all work together in the National Brownfields Coalition (NBC) to develop and advocate for federal policies and practices that promote the revitalization of brownfields.

ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

ASSESSMENT

Contaminants + Hazardous Materials:

- ACM: Asbestos-Containing Materials
- LBP: Lead-Based Paint
- COCs / COPCs: Contaminants of Concern / Contaminants of Potential Concern
- REC: Recognized Environmental Contaminants
- PFAS: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances
- VOCs: Volatile Organic Compounds

Assessment + Planning:

- AAI: All Appropriate Inquiries
- ABCA: Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives



SPOTLIGHT

You do **not** need to spell out all of these contaminants in anything besides an official report or *maybe* a grant application where it is relevant! Just know the *meaning* enough to convey the story.

ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

CLEANUP

Cleanup Process:

- P&T: Pump and Treat
- RAWP / RAP: Remedial Action Work Plan / Remediation Action Plan
- SVE: Soil Vapor Extraction
- UST / AST: Underground / Aboveground Storage Tank, leaking USTs are LUSTs

Closure + Completion:

- NFA/NFRAP: No Further Action letter / No Further Remedial Action Planned
- COC: Certificate of Completion
- RBCA: Risk-Based Corrective Action
- SLs: Screening Levels
- VCP: Voluntary Cleanup Program



ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

FUNDING RESOURCES

Federal Funding (EPA & HUD)

- MARC Grants: (The core EPA Brownfields grants) Multipurpose, Assessment, RLF, and Cleanup.
- CWAGST: Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States + Tribes
- RLF: Revolving Loan Fund
- CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
- EDI / BEDI: Economic Development Initiative / Brownfields EDI

State & Local Financing Tools:

- TIF: Tax Increment Financing
- EIFD: Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District
- VCP / VCRP Funding: State Voluntary Cleanup Program grants or tax credits.



CHECK IT OUT

**The Brownfield Financing Blueprint:
Funding Strategies and Stacking
Mechanisms Parts 1 & 2**

Wednesday, 10am in the Drake Breakout Room!

ACRONYMS TO KNOW IN REGION 9

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

Regional + National Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB):

- UConn: University of Connecticut
- NJIT: New Jersey Institute of Technology
- MAT: Mid-Atlantic TAB
- KSU: Kansas State University
- CCLR: Center for Creative Land Recycling

EPA Technical Assistance Resources:

- LRTA: Land Revitalization Technical Assistance
- TBA: Targeted Brownfields Assessment

BONUS: DATA RESOURCES

CA-Specific:

- CalEnviroscreen: California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool
- CEJST: California Environmental Justice Screening Tool
- NDSC: Neighborhood Data for Social Change

National:

- CDC/ATSDR: Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

THE COST OF OVER-ACRONYMIZING

- Losing your audience
 - Stop listening when they can't understand the message
- Feeling left out
 - Divides audience between those who understand vs those who don't
 - Causes anxiety, confusion or embarrassment
- Increases misunderstandings
 - REC like record? CARB like carbohydrate? Who is SARA?
 - Dilutes the message, call to action or the why behind what you are trying to communicate



Does your audience have glazed over eyes, are staring off into space or looking at their phones? They may be suffering from over-acronymizing.

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

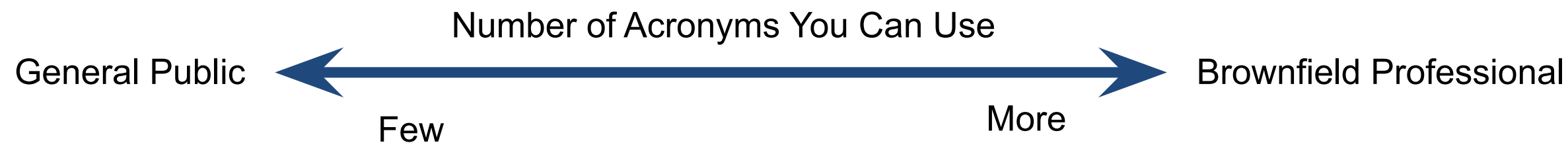
STRATEGIES FOR *ACRO-LITERACY*

GOALS:

- Information sharing
- Quick storytelling
- Integration of ideas
- Effective understanding of topics

STRATEGIES:

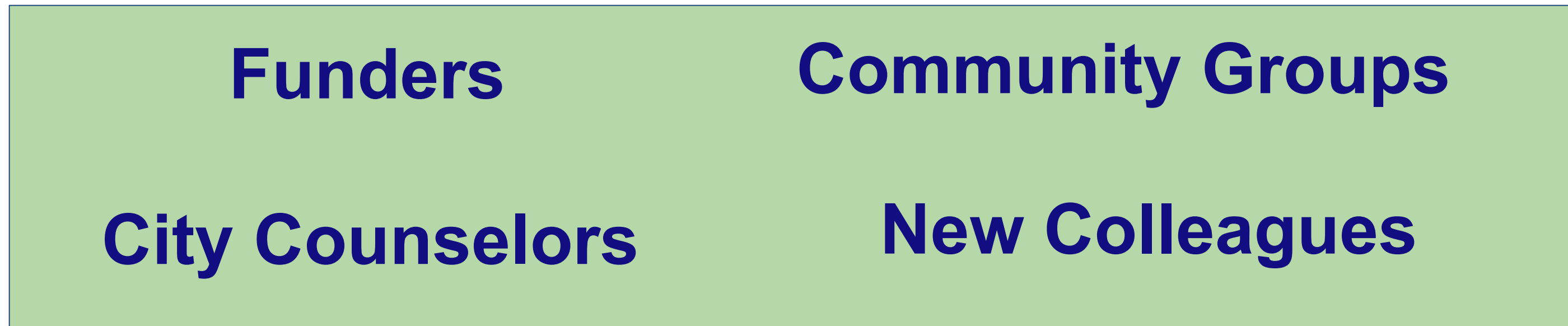
- Spell out on first mention
- 3-Acronym Cap
- Cheat Sheet + Acronym Index
- Plain language summary



COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

TELLING YOUR STORY TO STAKEHOLDERS

Sharing project milestones is more important than ever.
Do so effectively and clearly for:



...and anyone you want on board with
your project or program!

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

TELLING YOUR STORY TO STAKEHOLDERS

At a community meeting:

“We intend to apply to EPA’s TBA program to obtain funding for Phase 1 and Phase 2 ESAs. This will contribute to an ABCA which will support our application to DTSC’s RLF.”



Translation?

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

TELLING YOUR STORY TO STAKEHOLDERS

At a community meeting:

“We intend to apply to EPA’s TBA program to obtain funding for Phase 1 and Phase 2 ESAs. This will contribute to an ABCA which will support our application to DTSC’s RLF.”



“We intend to utilize EPA’s Targeted Brownfield Assessment program to complete site assessment services for our brownfield project. This will inform our cleanup plan, which we will use to apply for loan funding from California’s state environmental agency to clean it up.”

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

TELLING YOUR STORY TO STAKEHOLDERS

In an application for philanthropic funding:

“CCLR would like to build a park on land where there is confirmed contamination from previous USTs, including PFAS, PAH, and additional VOCs.”



Translation?

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE JARGON

TELLING YOUR STORY TO STAKEHOLDERS

In an application for philanthropic funding:

“CCLR would like to build a park on land where there is confirmed contamination from previous USTs, including PFAS, PAH, and additional VOCs.”



“The Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR), a national nonprofit dedicated to beneficial brownfield reuse, intends to develop a park on land previously occupied by a gas station. While the underground storage tanks were removed, the remaining contamination is dangerous to human health and must be assessed and cleaned up.”

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

(WTTA)

- Spell It Out!
- Convey meaning, not the alphabet
- Don't be afraid to ASK

Take an Acronym Cheat Sheet on your way out, and keep it handy!





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THANK YOU!

**IMAGINE, INNOVATE, IMPLEMENT
THE FUTURE OF LAND RECYCLING**



We appreciate your feedback, follow this QR code
to submit an evaluation form on Whova.

Join the conversation, use #CALRC2026 to share
your photos, insights and highlights!



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