

## CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

March 11, 2026

Full meeting documents, public comments, agenda, and future meeting dates may be found on the [CWDB website](#).

### Members in Attendance:

- Board Chair Joanna Rees\*
- Alysia Bell\*
- Jamil Dada\*
- Diane Factor\*
- Dr. Angelo Farooq\*
- Secretary Stewart Knox, represented by designee Abby Snay
- Janus Norman\*
- Robert Redlo\*
- Angel Sanchez\*

\* indicates member participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom

### CWDB Staff Participants:

- Kaina Pereira, Executive Director
- Nicholas Esquivel, Regional Specialist
- Michael Wiafe, Assistant Deputy Director, Workforce Policy and External Affairs

### Regional and State Partner Presenters:

- Peggy Murphy, Director, Humboldt County Economic Development
- Connie Stewart, Executive Director of Initiatives, Cal Poly Humboldt
- Aubrey Richeson, Planner/Data Analyst, Northern California Indian Development Council (NCIDC)
- Trelynd Bradley, Deputy Director, Innovation and Emerging Technologies, California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)

- Timothy Akers, M.S., PhD., Associate Provost for Academic Research, California State University (CSU), San Bernardino
- Ryan Keating, Ph. D., Professor, California State University, San Bernardino

## Agenda

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks
2. Redwood Coast Regional Update
  - a. Overview of Tour from CWDB Executive Director
  - b. CWDB Staff Report
  - c. Regional Leader Report
  - d. Board Member Discussion
  - e. Public Comment
3. Quantum California
  - a. Presentation
  - b. Board Member Discussion
  - c. Public Comment
4. General Public Comments
5. Adjournment

## 1. Welcome & Opening Remarks

The Executive Director called the meeting to order at approximately 10:10 a.m. and announced that he would need to depart early for a Senate hearing. Michael Waife would continue to lead the meeting in his absence.

## 2. Redwood Coast Regional Update

CWDB staff presented an update on the Redwood Coast Region, encompassing Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. The region faces challenges such as population outmigration, labor force compression, and significant infrastructure gaps in housing and broadband. Healthcare, education, and the public sector form the most stable employment base, while small businesses and tourism are vital for local economies. Strong governance and alignment are considered essential for implementing long-term projects.

Peggy Murphy, Director of Humboldt County Economic Development, discussed Humboldt County's economic and workforce development efforts. These efforts focus on both foundational industries like agriculture and forestry (now contributing to fire resilience), and emerging sectors such as offshore wind (supported by a \$1.5 million federal grant for

training), technology, drones, and maritime. Community colleges provide critical support services for these initiatives.

Connie Stewart, Executive Director of Initiatives at Cal Poly Humboldt highlighted the region's recent significant transformation, with nearly half a billion dollars invested to convert Humboldt State University into Cal Poly Humboldt. This investment supports place-based learning and new programs, shifting from a 2023-2025 focus on tech to a 2026 focus on health, resulting in a 4% enrollment increase, primarily in STEM fields. Key efforts include connecting students to local jobs, increasing Native student STEM enrollment, fostering internships, and establishing a healthcare education hub. Stewart emphasized that regional partnerships are crucial for addressing rural challenges, including broadband access and healthcare.

Aubrey Richeson from the NCIDC highlighted the persistent challenges faced by American Indian communities, including higher unemployment, mental health difficulties, lack of living-wage jobs, and transportation barriers. Richeson explained that NCIDC advocates for self-determination, culturally appropriate services, and improved access to education and essential resources. The organization focuses on leveraging cultural activities and anticipates funding for tribal workforce development and social work training, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and supporting Native skills and collaborating with county partners.

No public comment was received on this item.

### 3. Quantum California

Trelynd Bradley from Go-BIZ provided an update on Quantum California, highlighting California's strong position in innovation (70% of US venture innovation, 30% of US patents). The state leads in quantum venture capital, hosts the only national NSF center, and boasts top universities and research infrastructure. Quantum technology offers an alternative to classical computing with applications across AI, manufacturing, and defense. Under California Jobs First, Go-BIZ is investing \$4 million (AB 940) to develop a quantum strategy by July 2026, including sales tax exclusions (SB 86) and permitting reform (SB 131) to support quantum manufacturing. California has the largest volume of skilled workers and job postings in quantum-related fields, with many existing roles easily transitioning to quantum positions.

Timothy Akers, Associate Provost for Academic Research, and Ryan Keating, Professor at CSU, San Bernardino, presented on quantum technologies and developing a quantum-literate workforce for California. They highlighted that quantum AI infusion is critical due to its implications for national security. They shared about the diversity of the quantum supply chain. Chemicals, life sciences, automotive, and financial services are the four industries expected to see the first impact from the quantum supply chain.

The National Quantum Literacy Network aims to help individuals build and maintain quantum expertise. Dr. Akers underscored the importance of encouraging the workforce and youth to explore quantum, noting national security risks if the US does not invest in

quantum while other countries like China are rapidly advancing. QLITE, a Next Generation Quantum Learning program developed by Dr. Akers, promotes learning to build quantum computers to foster innovation. Quantum computers process information simultaneously, a key distinction from basic computers. An estimated 250,000 quantum jobs will be needed by 2030. The QLITE program, comprising 10 modules, is used by the Pentagon for workforce development. Additionally, a veteran training program called ACEVets is being developed. On April 15-16, 2026, CSU, San Bernadino will host a [conference](#) on workforce development around quantum and emerging technologies.

No public comment was received on this item.

#### **4. General Public Comments**

No general public comments were received.

#### **5. Adjournment**

All CWDB business having concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.