# **Secretary Speaker Series – Panelists Bios and Links**

# **Golden Coast Pride: Exploring LGBTQ2S+ Stories in California**

# **Thursday, June 6, 2024**

**Panelists:**

**-** Director, Caroline Thomas Jacobs (she/her), Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety

- Assistant Professor/Andrew Carnegie Fellow, Dr. Michael Méndez (he/him), (PhD, MCP) School of Social Ecology, Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy, University of California, Irvine

- Assistant Chief of Adult and Family Medicine, Dr. Jason Gritti (he/him), Kaiser Permanente

- Program Manager, Dylan Stern (he/him), Science Funding at the Delta Stewardship Council

- Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Communications (he/him), Jacob Roper, Department of Conservation

**Secretary Speaker Series:** <https://resources.ca.gov/About-Us/Secretary-Speaker-Series>

**Celebrate Pride with Us:** <https://resources.ca.gov/pride>

**Secretary Wade Crowfoot:** <https://resources.ca.gov/About-Us/Who-We-Are/Secretary-for-Natural-Resources>

**Director, Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety**

**Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety: Driving utility-related wildfire risk reduction for the State of California:** <https://energysafety.ca.gov/>

Bio: <https://energysafety.ca.gov/who-we-are/executive-team/caroline-thomas-jacobs/>

Caroline Thomas Jacobs was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom on June 30, 2021 as the first director of the new Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety under the California Natural Resources Agency.

Director Thomas Jacobs was appointed by Governor Newsom in October 2019 as director of the wildfire safety division within the California Public Utilities Commission. She was responsible for standing up the new division and implementing oversight of electrical corporations’ wildfire safety pursuant to the requirements of Assembly Bill 1054 and Assembly Bill 111. In this position, she envisioned and built the organizational and operational structure to exercise regulatory assessment of utility wildfire safety measures, which is now the basis upon which the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety operates.

Prior to serving in these roles, Director Thomas Jacobs was chief of headquarters response operations for the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services where she was responsible for leading the California state warning center and state operations center during the catastrophic wildfires and other disasters experienced since 2017, including establishing the initial response framework for public safety power shutoffs.

**Assistant Professor/Andrew Carnegie Fellow, Dr. Michael Méndez, (PhD, MCP) School of Social Ecology, Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy, University of California, Irvine**

UC Irvine School of Sociology: <https://socialecology.uci.edu/>

Bio: <http://www.michaelanthonymendez.com/about-michael-a.html>

Dr. Michael Méndez is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Planning and Policy at the University of California, Irvine, an Andrew Carnegie Fellow, and a Visiting Scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). He most recently served as the inaugural James and Mary Pinchot Faculty Fellow in Sustainability Studies and Associate Research Scientist at the Yale School of the Environment. Michael has more than a decade of senior-level experience in the public and private sectors, where he consulted and actively engaged in the policymaking process. This included working for the California State Legislature as a senior consultant, governmental relations advocate, a member of the California State Mining & Geology Board, and as vice-chair of the Sacramento City Planning Commission.

**Amplified harm: LGBTQ+ disaster displacement**

[https://socialecology.uci.edu/news/amplified-harm-lgbtq-disaster-displacement](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsocialecology.uci.edu%2Fnews%2Famplified-harm-lgbtq-disaster-displacement&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7Cd47e860f7d3e4407d03e08dc865c653f%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638532978612515945%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=69JFJvX1FG9Q2KmG%2B6P9Oan0sQIIeIfqhH8b3jGZEIM%3D&reserved=0)

**Queer and Present Danger**

Understanding the Disparate Impacts of Disasters on LGBTQ+ Communities

[https://socialecology.uci.edu/event/queer-and-present-danger](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsocialecology.uci.edu%2Fevent%2Fqueer-and-present-danger&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7Cd47e860f7d3e4407d03e08dc865c653f%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638532978612533551%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Lt5voRDmGf7LUvKwPFZNATdF85t14Q5TJ7oY8nRy6TA%3D&reserved=0)

**Queer Communities Often Left Out of Disaster Planning, Research Shows**

[https://www.kqed.org/science/1978439/queer-communities-often-left-out-of-disaster-planning-research-shows](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.kqed.org%2Fscience%2F1978439%2Fqueer-communities-often-left-out-of-disaster-planning-research-shows&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7Cd47e860f7d3e4407d03e08dc865c653f%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638532978612545480%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=R1pZjXW%2FOj72rx7%2FKWDDnNQoZDy64YEakhbMl%2BLfwQo%3D&reserved=0)

***Disasters Forced 2.5 Million Americans From Their Homes Last Year***

[https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/climate/climate-disasters-survivors-displacement.html](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2024%2F02%2F22%2Fclimate%2Fclimate-disasters-survivors-displacement.html&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7Cd47e860f7d3e4407d03e08dc865c653f%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638532978612555406%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=1guUGLfGV4dQ3C8JdulIz%2BD%2BK4fDhtsSocSxiJTI1zI%3D&reserved=0)

Dr. Michael Méndez is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Planning and Policy at the University of California, Irvine, an Andrew Carnegie Fellow, and a Visiting Scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). He most recently served as the inaugural James and Mary Pinchot Faculty Fellow in Sustainability Studies and Associate Research Scientist at the Yale School of the Environment. Michael has more than a decade of senior-level experience in the public and private sectors, where he consulted and actively engaged in the policymaking process. This included working for the California State Legislature as a senior consultant, governmental relations advocate, a member of the California State Mining & Geology Board, and as vice-chair of the Sacramento City Planning Commission.

In 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom appointed Dr. Méndez to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. The board regulates water quality in a region of 11 million people. In 2023, he was appointed by Deanne Crisell, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to serve on their National Advisory Council. In this capacity, council members advise the Administrator on all aspects of emergency management, including preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation for natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other manmade disasters.

**Assistant Chief of Adult and Family Medicine, Dr. Jason Gritti, Kaiser Permanente**

<https://mydoctor.kaiserpermanente.org/ncal/providers/jasongritti>

<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/northern-california/front-door>

Dr Jason Grittti, is a board certified in Internal Medicine, Lifestyle Medicine, and Obesity medicine. He has an MA in Business Management and a MBA in Healthcare Management. He is an elite personal trainer with a passion for preventative health care and education. Dr. Gritti is currently the Assistant Chief of Adult and Family Medine KP SSC, on the steering committee for Diversity and Inclusion, and volunteer medical director for The Sacramento LGBT Center.

His Diversity and Inclusion work has a focus on Transgender Sensitivity Training and education on sexual and gender minority (SGM) care. Including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning (LGBTQ+) individuals. The main goal of his work is to train and support both clinicians and staff on how to address the intersectionality of this community and reduce the disparities of care in this member population.

Dr. Gritti believes that a key aspect of his work is to help providers, in both primary care and subspecialty care, understand that while there are clearly some unique needs in this population, it is not overwhelming or insurmountable. This minority group includes people that are often just looking for compassionate and culturally sensitive care. As a provider, you cannot understand and correctly treat your patients if we do not know who they really are.  Some of this work is to promote education and understanding, to reduce the anxiety created historically, by our education system not providing the training on the needs of this patient population. The lack of this knowledge, makes colleagues and supportive staff feel unprepared when providing care for our SGM patients. The patients and members deserve only the best treatment which includes culturally sensitive care.

Dr. Gritti received his MD from St. George University, while co-matriculating a Diploma of Higher Education in Medical Sciences from Northumbria University, Newcastle U.K. He completed his Medical Residency at SUNY Downstate University in Brooklyn, NY. Dr. Gritti made the decision to go back to medical school after working in medical research at Boston Scientific and Kyphon Corporation. He worked first in cardiovascular research and then minimally invasive spinal research. During that time, he earned his MBA in Medical Healthcare Management from AIU, and his MA in Business Management from St. Scholastica. Historical he comes from Minneapolis, MN and earned his undergrad from Minnesota State University. Dr. Gritti states that this passion to address Disparities of Care was triggered initially by the foreign exchange studies completed at Wycliff Hall, Oxford, England, Tanjin Foreign Studies University, Tanjin, China, and School for Field Studies, Boston University - Kenya, Africa. This radically changed his viewpoint on life and made him want to focus more on both equality and equity of care.

**Raising awareness during PRIDE month.**

**HEALTH DISPARITIES**

* Gay and bisexual men, transgender women often are at higher risk of HIV and other STIs.
	+ Think PrEP and Doxy PEP.
* Lesbians and bisexual women may have higher rates of ovarian, breast cancer related to nulliparity.
* Lower rates of preventive cancer screenings.
* Lesbians nearly 3 times more likely to be obese or overweight than other women.
* Exogenous hormone use may lead to higher risk of cardiovascular disease.
* These disparities intersect with racial/ethnic disparities (e.g. Black lesbians and obesity, diabetes)
	+ National LGBT Health Education Center – A program of the Fenway institute.
* Transgender individuals often;
	+ experience a high prevalence of HIV/STIs, hate crimes, behavioral health issues, and suicide.
	+ have difficulty accessing preventive and urgent care.
	+ are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual or LGB individuals.
* Transgender Male – Pap smear, providers must indicate member is on testosterone.
* Transgender Female – Needs Mammograms after 5 years on hormone replacement therapy.
* **2009 survey of 4,916 LGBT people found that 56% of LGB patients, 70% of trans patients reported:**
	+ Being refused needed care.
	+ Health providers refusing to touch them, using excessive precautions (plastic gloves).
	+ Being blamed for their health status.
	+ Health providers being rough or abusive.
		- Lambda Legal, *When health care isn’t caring,* 2010.
* Causes many LGBTQI+ people to not seek subsequent care.
* Elderly LGBTQ individuals face additional barriers to health because of isolation, fewer family supports, and a lack of social and support services.
* National LGBT Health Education Center – A program of the Fenway institute.

Video Links: Disparity Can Kill

* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6J8JbBGK-Y](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Dc6J8JbBGK-Y&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7C56c497990faf4cc4c78208dc844361f1%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638530672882132922%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KV0DjvO3PDKNSCRqkcsuxPK7o1QH9mXUg9kBueDeQDY%3D&reserved=0)
* [Elderly Challenges in LGBTQ+](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DlkPJxQorieo&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7C56c497990faf4cc4c78208dc844361f1%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638530672882142701%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=LRmaSmLHgJKipQoXEM3R7v2Wg6xjMge4jDvStWjFKuE%3D&reserved=0)
* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkPJxQorieo](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DlkPJxQorieo&data=05%7C02%7CGita.Chandra%40resources.ca.gov%7C56c497990faf4cc4c78208dc844361f1%7Cb71d56524b834257afcd7fd177884564%7C0%7C0%7C638530672882151040%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vflDh67wPkALC1JZaD6bpEmaRdLPzvkKYhVPoCH4NQc%3D&reserved=0)

**Dylan Stern, Program Manager, Science Funding at the Delta Stewardship Council**

[**https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/**](https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/)

Bio: Dylan Stern has worked at the Delta Science Program, part of the Delta Stewardship Council, since 2015. A proud civil service scientist, he is particularly interested in the intersection of water quality, ecology, and water supply in the complex Delta. He was previously an environmental scientist at Tetra Tech and a staff scientist at Bachand & Associates. He received a Master of Science in environmental science and management from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Bachelor of Science in environmental science from California State University, Chico. When he isn’t working, Dylan enjoys drawing, baking, and spending time with his daughter.

**Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Communications, Jacob Roper, Department of Conservation**

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/about-us/leadership-team>

Bio:

Jacob Roper serves as the Assistant Director for Communications and Public Affairs at the Department of Conservation, where he shares the Department's work to protect natural and working lands and safely regulate the use of resources. He is a lifelong, third generation Californian, who studied Political Science and Journalism at UC Santa Cruz.

He previously served as Assistant Secretary of Government Operations, Press Secretary to the State Controller and Treasurer, and as a press aide to Governor Gray Davis. He ran a statewide campaign to connect low-income families with tax credit programs under the Brown Administration. He is a proud Banana Slug, uncle and dog dad who lives in Sacramento.