

## Pavement

**MAY 2026**

**Project Title:** Partnered Pavement Research Center (PPRC) 20: Mechanistic-Empirical Design

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## CalME Standard Materials Library for Flexible Pavements

Extending California Mechanistic-Empirical (CalME) Materials Library with Regionally Characterized Mechanistic-Empirical (ME) Models.

### WHAT IS THE NEED?

To accomplish its mission of providing an efficient transportation system that enhances California's economy and livability, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) encourages innovations in pavement materials to improve efficiency and increase sustainability. California is a large state with diverse geological conditions. The materials used in any given project are dominated by the available local quarries, refineries, and asphalt-mixing plants. These local materials behave differently than materials from other regions when used in pavements, and therefore materials representative of each region need to be characterized. This research study aims to characterize new materials in terms of their mechanical behavior before they can be effectively used in pavement designs. The updated Standard Materials Library allows Caltrans engineers to effectively use materials available in their districts within CalME software for future pavement designs.

### WHAT ARE WE DOING?

This task is a continuation of the Standard Materials Library project. It tests and includes additional regional and new materials from the field, including partial- and full-depth recycled materials, PG+5 mixes, bonded concrete overlays, and Asphalt Concrete (AC) projects using performance-related specifications (PRS). It also expands the focus on aged properties of the mix. The field or laboratory data used in characterizing each material will be added to the Standard Materials Library in Caltrans' asphalt concrete pavement design software, CalME.

This study includes the following sub-tasks:



DRISI provides solutions and knowledge that improves California's transportation system.

- Updating the strategy for collecting and testing regional materials
- Material sampling and testing
- Developing an asphalt concrete specimen-production procedure
- Developing fatigue-testing procedures for polymer- and rubber-modified mixes
- Refining performance-testing methods for asphalt binder, Fine Aggregate Matrix (FAM) mixes, and asphalt concrete mixes
- Preparing project reports

## WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The goal of this project is to characterize new or additional materials so that Caltrans can use them effectively and efficiently in pavement designs. These additional materials will become part of the growing Materials Library in CalME.

## WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

Compared to empirical methods, the Mechanistic-Empirical method accommodates new materials and construction processes more effectively. Having accurate material properties will help Caltrans expand the use of M-E method for flexible-pavement design and rehabilitation throughout California, thereby reducing maintenance costs and creating savings by maintaining longer-lasting pavements.

## WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

Research activities are complete, and the research team is preparing the final report.