

Date of Hearing: May 19, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

AB 1431 (Frazier) – As Amended May 3, 2021

Policy Committee: Natural Resources

Vote: 11 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes numerous state goals for fuel treatment and vegetation management contained in the “California Forest Carbon Plan” (Plan) and the “California’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan” (Action Plan) released by the Governor’s Forest Management Task Force.

This bill also requires the Natural Resources Agency (NRA) and CalEPA to submit a report, on or before January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, to the appropriate policy and budget committees of the Legislature on the progress made towards achieving the state goals established by this bill.

Specifically, this bill establishes as state goals for fuel treatment and vegetation management all of the following:

- 1) Increase forest restoration and fuel treatment to 100,000 acres per year by 2025.
- 2) Increase the area reforested annually by 25% above 2018 levels.
- 3) By 2025, expand areas of high priority habitat by 5% above current levels, as provided in the Action Plan.
- 4) Increase vegetation management to 500,000 acres per year on nonfederal lands by 2025.
- 5) Urge the federal government to achieve similar treatment levels on federal lands,
- 6) Expand wood products manufacturing in the state.
- 7) Increase carbon storage through increased use of durable wood products in buildings,
- 8) Streamline the planning and permitting for forest restoration and forest health projects.
- 9) Develop a comprehensive program to assist private forest landowners.
- 10) Increase by 10% the acreage of forest land protected by conservation easements that include specified management objectives. Specifies that conservation easements are required to focus on areas that can effectively sequester and store resilient carbon while providing wildfire habitat, protecting watershed values, and supporting other forest ecosystem benefits.

- 11) By 2030, significantly increase California's urban tree canopy, targeting disadvantaged and low-income communities and low-canopy areas.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Annual reporting costs for NRA and CalEPA of approximately \$75,000 for each agency (General Fund or special fund).

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

AB 1431 would stress the urgency of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires while placing accountability on the agencies responsible for implementing programs and projects to meet those goals. AB 1431 would also allow the Legislature greater oversight by requiring NRA and CalEPA to report annually on the progress of meeting the goals outlined in the (California Forest Carbon) Plan.

- 2) **Forest Carbon Plan.** The Plan was released in May of 2018 and was written by the Forest Climate Action Team, which includes various state agencies, federal agencies and local governments. The lead drafters of the Plan were CalFire NRA and CalEPA. The Plan included various findings, proposed actions, and recommendations for implementation to "reverse historic adverse trends and firmly establish California's forests as a more resilient and reliable long-term carbon sink, rather than a GHG and black carbon emission source." Also in May of 2018, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-52-18 to combat dangerous tree mortality, increase the ability of our forests to capture carbon and systematically improve forest management. The executive order was aligned with the various findings, proposed actions, and recommendations for implementation of the Plan.
- 3) **California Carbon Forest Plan.** The Plan was developed under Governor Brown, who also created the Governor's Forest Management Task Force. The task force continued its work under Governor Newsom. On January 8, 2021, the task force released a comprehensive action plan to reduce wildfire risk for vulnerable communities, improve the health of forests and wildlands and accelerate action to combat climate change. Many of the goals contained in the Action Plan overlap and in some cases conflict, with the goals of the Plan.

Analysis Prepared by: Jennifer Galehouse / APPR. / (916) 319-2081