CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS
AB 1644 (Flora)
As Amended June 21, 2022
2/3 vote. Urgency

SUMMARY

Seeks to ensure the timely delivery of funds to prevent and fight wildfires as soon as possible, by exempting certain projects funded by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) from the requirements of the California Jobs Plan Act of 2021 (Act).

Senate Amendments
Provides that the Act is not intended to weaken preexisting legal protections for workers by excusing compliance with any requirements that would apply in the absence of the Act.

Makes related findings and declarations to clarify intent.

COMMENTS

A letter of intent submitted to the Assembly Journal, dated September 9, 2021 by Assembly Member Burke states, "AB 680 [(Burke), Chapter 746, Statutes of 2021] was not intended to apply to wildfire prevention projects that receive continuous funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Due to newly amended budget language, funding was continuously appropriated for wildfire prevention projects, and I was unable to amend AB 680 in a timely fashion to expressly state that such projects are not affected by my bill. AB 680 was drafted with the intent to affect projects funded via Health and Safety Code Section 39719 (included in the current version of this bill) as they existed in statute when the bill was drafted. I will introduce urgency legislation with Senator Dodd in January to address this issue in order to assure that money for wildfire prevention projects will not be affected in 2025 when the bill guidelines would go into effect.

I am committed to reinforcing the clear intention and plain language of AB 680 relative to wildfire prevention projects."

According to the Author
"AB 1644 will help clarify that wildfire projects were not intended to be included in new requirements outlined in AB 680. Allowing this exemption will help to further support wildfire projects and safe wildfire management with the most skilled workforce available."

Arguments in Support
The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) supports this measure stating, "RCRC worked diligently with the author’s office to exclude forest health and resilience projects from inclusion in the California Jobs Plan Act of 2021, but a permanent budget allocation to wildfire and forest resilience programs from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) in the 2021-22 State Budget Package folded those projects back into the provisions of the Act and, as such, will have profound impacts on the ability for local governments to execute much needed forest health and resilience projects in high fire risk areas where a skilled local workforce is already difficult to secure. The ability to utilize GGRF dollars through programs like California Climate Investments has afforded rural local governments the ability to undertake such vital projects as clearing dead and dying trees from critical infrastructure and residential properties during"
California’s recent tree mortality epidemic, as well as completing community wildfire mitigation projects in concert with local fire prevention organizations.

By exempting forest health and fire prevention projects from certain standards in the Act that would have disadvantaged rural, fire prone communities that desperately need resources to complete forest resilience projects, AB 1644 alleviates the burden on fire-impacted communities where access to GGRF funding is essential."

Arguments in Opposition
None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

VOTES:

ASM LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT: 7-0-0
YES: Kalra, Flora, Jones-Sawyer, Reyes, Seyarto, Ward, Lee

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-2
YES: Holden, Bigelow, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Megan Dahle, Davies, Mike Fong, Seyarto, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, Wilson
ABS, ABST OR NV: Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-0-13
YES: Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bigelow, Bloom, Mia Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Cervantes, Chen, Choi, Cooley, Cooper, Megan Dahle, Daly, Flora, Mike Fong, Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Haney, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wilson, Wood, Rendon
ABS, ABST OR NV: Boerner Horvath, Cunningham, Davies, Gray, Grayson, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Quirk-Silva, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Valladares, Ward

SENATE FLOOR: 36-0-4
ABS, ABST OR NV: Borgeas, Dahle, Gonzalez, Roth

UPDATED

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