

Date of Hearing: July 14, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Lorena Gonzalez, Chair
SB 453 (Hurtado) – As Amended June 30, 2021

Policy Committee:	Agriculture	Vote:	10 - 0
	Higher Education		12 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill creates the Agricultural Biosecurity Fund (Fund), authorizes the Fund to receive public and private money and continuously appropriates money from the Fund to the California State University (CSU) Agricultural Research Institute (ARI). This bill requires the ARI to administer and award research grants to CSU campuses associated with the ARI, regarding agricultural biosecurity and best practices to mitigate infectious agents on California's animal and plant agricultural system.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Absorbable costs to CSU to administer the grant program, if the ARI receives money from the Fund. Although this bill continuously appropriates money from the Fund to the ARI, this bill does not provide any appropriation of money into the Fund needed to administer the grant program.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control estimates three out of four emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals, and such "biosecurity threats have the power of not only effecting our economic output, but also our health and the health of the world around us." The author intends for SB 453 to put California and the CSU system at the forefront of research on biosecurity by establishing a state fund to distribute money to the CSU ARI to study biosecurity and related best practices.
- 2) **Biosecurity and Emerging Infectious Diseases.** Agricultural biosecurity refers to a series of management procedures designed to prevent or greatly reduce the risk of introducing infectious agents to a farm. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Institute of Health awarded \$17 million in grants for the creation of 11 Centers for Research in Emerging Infectious Diseases (CREIDs) tasked with investigating how and where viruses and other pathogens emerge from wildlife and spread to humans. Two public universities in California, UC Davis and UC Berkeley, received federal funding for a CREID.
- 3) **CSU ARI.** The ARI is a partnership across multiple CSU campuses, including those at Chico, Fresno, Pomona, San Luis Obispo, Humboldt and Monterey Bay, to provide applied research ensuring the sustainability of California agriculture. Each year, the ARI accepts proposals and disperses funding for research projects to the affiliated campuses. This bill creates a specific fund in the State Treasury to receive public and private money for purposes

of supporting research and best practices on agricultural biosecurity. This bill also requires the ARI to administer a grant program for related purposes, but does not specify that the Fund is the revenue source for the grant program. If the author intends for the Fund to support the ARI biosecurity grant program, instead of requiring other CSU revenues to support the program, then this provision of the bill should be clarified.

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