

GOVERNOR'S VETO
AB 1200 (Caloza)
As Enrolled September 8, 2025
2/3 vote

SUMMARY

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires Cal OES, biennially, to convene key personnel and agencies that have emergency management roles and responsibilities to participate in tabletop exercises in which the participant's emergency preparedness plans are discussed and evaluated under various simulated catastrophic disaster situations.
- 2) Requires Cal OES to invite governmental agencies, educational entities, military installations, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations that operate or own concerns in various sectors that provide fundamental services in the community that, when stabilized, enable all other aspects of society to function to participate in the tabletop exercises as specified.
- 3) Requires the disaster situations be based on the catastrophic plans for major earthquakes and floods, as specified.
- 4) Requires tabletop exercises designed by Cal OES enhance the capabilities of the participants to do, among other things, plan to engage the communities that they each serve, provide coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods, establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure, and manage the security and resilience of supply chains, as specified.
- 5) Requires Cal OES to report on each tabletop exercise it conducts pursuant to this section to the committees on budget, the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management, and the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization by February 1, 2028, and biennially thereafter of the calendar year following each biennial simulation and evaluation.
- 6) Directs Cal OES, to the greatest extent possible, use federal preparedness grant funding to offset the state, local, and tribal government costs associated with participation in the tabletop exercises described in this section.
- 7) Requires Cal OES, in cooperation with California Volunteers, to coordinate annually with local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs to conduct community disaster preparedness training in vulnerable regions of the state, based on data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Risk Index and a community vulnerability index, or similar risk assessment tools, as specified.
- 8) Requires Cal OES and California Volunteers to ensure that the annual training conducted pursuant to this section is coordinated with any established CERT program serving the region in which the training takes place and do the following:

(a) Emphasize actions to increase community resilience to disasters, utilize community green or open space for drills and preparedness activities whenever feasible, and promote inclusive engagement of community members, including individuals with disabilities and those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

(b) Include testing of community emergency notification systems in the area. The Office of Emergency Services shall prioritize testing in communities that have experienced past challenges with emergency alerts or evacuation warnings, including those observed during recent wildfires in the state.

Governor's Veto Message

This bill would require the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to biennially convene key personnel and agencies to participate in a tabletop exercise and require Cal OES, in cooperation with California Volunteers, to annually conduct community disaster preparedness training in vulnerable regions of the state.

I appreciate the author's commitment to disaster readiness. However, this bill is duplicative of existing preparedness measures already in place to enhance disaster readiness. Cal OES already conducts targeted, multi-jurisdictional, and tabletop exercises that are strategically aligned with existing plans and capabilities. The exercises envisioned in this bill are overly broad and lack clarity. As a result, requiring these exercises would unintentionally undermine the effectiveness of California's current emergency preparedness efforts. Additionally, this bill would result in new ongoing costs in the millions of dollars to implement.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that recognizes the challenging fiscal landscape our state faces while maintaining our commitment to working families and our most vulnerable communities. With significant fiscal pressures and the federal government's hostile economic policies, it is vital we remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

COMMENTS

While the Administration and Cal OES claim that his bill is duplicative of existing preparedness measures, the Committee is unaware of any strategic and specific effort by Cal OES, in coordination with California Volunteers, to annually conduct community disaster preparedness training in vulnerable regions of the state.

Background: California continues to face increasingly complex and destructive disasters including fires, floods, earthquakes, and atmospheric storms. In 2024 alone, wildfires in the Palisades and Eaton Canyon areas overwhelmed emergency systems and revealed gaps in response coordination. While California has developed strong response plans in collaboration with FEMA, there is no formal requirement to regularly test these plans through joint, interagency exercises.

Without recurring drills, key agencies, sectors, and responders may not be fully prepared when disaster strikes. Issues like miscommunication, logistical delays, or overlooked vulnerable populations have emerged repeatedly in after-action reports. The California State Auditor has also identified shortcomings in preparedness for vulnerable communities.

2025 Los Angeles Fires: In January 2025, Los Angeles County experienced the second and third most destructive fires in California history: the Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire. AccuWeather estimates these fires' total damage and economic loss to be between \$250 billion and \$275 billion. At its height, the fires placed an estimated 331,335 people on an evacuation advisory, with nearly 192,000 residents facing mandatory evacuation and roughly 140,000 subject to warnings. The blazes burned a combined 37,469 acres and leveled entire communities in the Pacific Palisades and Altadena neighborhoods of LA County.

The Eaton Fire became the second most destructive fire in California history after destroying 9,418 buildings, 1,074 structures damaged, and 17 confirmed civilian fatalities. The Palisades Fire is the third most destructive fire in state history, with 6,837 structures destroyed, 973 structures damaged, and 12 confirmed civilian fatalities. As firefighters were battling the largest conflagrations, additional fires broke out in the Los Angeles area. Crews were able to stop the forward spread and contain the blazes. These fires included the Lidia, Archer, Woodley, Sunset, Kenneth, Hurst, and Auto fires, which burned close to 2,400 acres between them. Two weeks after the initial fires, the Hughes Fire began near Castaic Lake in northern Los Angeles County on January 22 and grew to over 10,000 acres. Firefighters fully contained the fire on January 30 after covering 10,425 acres.

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Emergency Preparedness and Response: Cal OES is responsible for addressing natural, technological, or manmade disasters and emergencies, and preparing the State to prevent, respond to, quickly recover from, and mitigate the effects of both intentional and natural disasters. As part of their overall preparedness mission, Cal OES is required to develop a State Emergency Plan (SEP) and State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP); maintain the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the Emergency Management Mutual Aid System (EMMA); and assist counties with their local Emergency Operation Plans (EOP). Cal OES, in coordination with FEMA and local partners, has developed four Catastrophic Plans to augment the State Emergency Plan.

According to the Author

As disasters grow more frequent and severe, California must regularly go beyond written plans and into practiced preparedness. AB 1200 requires the state to convene realistic, multi-agency tabletop disaster drills every two years. These exercises will simulate catastrophic emergencies and identify weaknesses in coordination, communication, and outreach- especially for our most vulnerable residents. When emergencies hit, every minute counts and all responders play a critical role. Practicing our response in advance will save time, resources, and lives. AB 1200 is about making sure that when the next big emergency strikes, Californians are ready."

Arguments in Support

None on file.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, OES reports total costs of approximately \$3.57 million in the first year and \$2.82 million annually ongoing for 11 new positions in OES's California Specialized Training Institute and Community Emergency Response Team (General Fund). Other costs include ongoing travel expenses, technology licenses, and training materials, as well as for workload associated with curriculum development.

VOTES

ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 7-0-0

YES: Ransom, Hadwick, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon, DeMaio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0-0

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom,

Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Reyes

UPDATED

VERSION: September 8, 2025

CONSULTANT: Mike Dayton / E.M. / (916) 319-3802

FN: 0002205