

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1486 (Soria)

As Amended January 22, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the State Department of Education (DOE), in consultation with the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), to establish a grant program to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that are designated as Agricultural Experiment Stations or Agricultural Research Institutes by the University of California and the California State University to develop or expand research farms to improve climate resiliency, as specified.

Major Provisions

- 1) States the intent of the Legislature to ensure that the \$15 million made available for grants to educational institutions for research farms is used for this purpose.
- 2) Requires the DOE, in consultation with CDFA, to establish a grant program to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that are designated as Agricultural Experiment Stations or Agricultural Research Institutes to develop or expand research farms to improve climate resiliency, in accordance with The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4).

COMMENTS

Proposition 4 authorized the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$10 billion to fund projects for safe drinking water, drought, flood, and water resilience, wildfire and forest resilience, coastal resilience, extreme heat mitigation, biodiversity and nature-based climate solutions, climate-smart, sustainable, and resilient farms, ranches, and working lands, park creation and outdoor access, and clean air programs.

Of these funds, Proposition 4 allocated \$300 million to fund improvements in climate resilience and sustainability of agricultural lands. As part of this allocation, \$15 million was made available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to DOE, in consultation with CDFA, to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that are designated as Agricultural Experiment Stations or Agricultural Research Institutes, to develop research farms to improve climate resiliency, as specified.

SB 105 (Wiener) Chapter 104, Statutes of 2025 appropriated Prop 4 Research Farms funds to be available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2028, and liquidation until June 30, 2031, and are available contingent upon the enactment of Assembly Bill 1486 of the 2025–26 Regular Session.

According to the Author

Proposition 4's research farm grants will help California's public colleges improve existing, or help start up, research farms with a focus on improving climate resiliency.

Arguments in Support

This bill, by expanding the network of research farms to continue this kind of groundbreaking work, will provide additional investment in the kind of innovation that is needed to respond to

the ongoing climate crisis. The practices developed by these kinds of networks will be crucial to enabling California's agricultural sector to meet sustainability challenges and continue thriving into the future. Investments in our climate change infrastructure, such as this bill, are more important than ever in our current climate of unpredictable and changing fiscal and regulatory environments. We applaud you for supporting this vitally important work.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

- 1) CDE will incur ongoing costs of an unknown amount, likely in the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars, to establish and administer the required grant program. CDE estimates ongoing costs of approximately \$1.1 million for 5.5 new staff as well as IT, contracting, and travel costs (bond funds, possibly General Fund).
- 2) Cost pressure of an unknown but significant amount, likely in the millions of dollars, to provide grants to specified public postsecondary educational institutions to develop or expand research farms (bond funds).

As noted below, the Proposition 4 climate bond provides \$15 million for this purpose. The bond provides that 7% of the funds allocated for a grant program may be used to pay for the administrative costs of that program. If this 7% set-aside is a one-time allowance, bond funds may cover CDE's administrative costs for approximately one year. The department may need to seek funding from a different fund source (like the General Fund) to cover its administrative costs in subsequent years.

- 3) CDFA reports minor and absorbable costs for its consultative role.

VOTES

ASM AGRICULTURE: 8-0-0

YES: Soria, Alanis, Aguiar-Curry, Connolly, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Irwin, Ransom

ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0

YES: Bryan, Alanis, Connolly, Ellis, Flora, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Muratsuchi, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Stefani, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Bauer-Kahan, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

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

UPDATED

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