
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1486
Author: Soria (D), et al.
Amended: 6/10/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/3/26

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Reyes

SENATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE: 7-0, 7/1/26

AYES: Blakespear, Valladares, Allen, Dahle, Gonzalez, Hurtado, Menjivar

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 1/29/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Climate resiliency: research farms: grant program

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), in consultation with the California 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 Agriculture Research Institutes by the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) to develop or expand research farms to improve climate resiliency.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes, under the California Constitution, the UC as a public trust to be administered by the Regents of the UC with full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to

insure the security of its funds and compliance with the terms of the endowments of the university, and such competitive bidding procedures as may be made applicable to the university for construction contracts, selling real property, and purchasing materials, goods and services. (Constitution of California, Article IX, Section 9)

- 2) Declares the UC as the primary state-supported academic agency for research. (Education Code (EC) § 66010.4 (c))
- 3) Establishes the CSU, under the administration of the Trustees of the CSU, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in the state. (EC § 66600)
- 4) Makes \$15,000,000 available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the State Department of Education, in consultation with CDFA, for purposes of providing 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. (Public Resource Code § 93570)

This bill requires CDE, in consultation with the 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 UC and the CSU to develop or expand research farms to improve climate resiliency.

Comments

Need for the bill. As noted in the Assembly Appropriations analysis, “The \$10 billion Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, approved by voters in 2024 as Proposition 4, allocated \$300 million to fund improvements in climate resilience and sustainability of agricultural lands. As part of this allocation, the bond makes \$15 million available, upon appropriation, to CDE, in consultation with CDFA, to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions designated as agricultural experiment stations or agricultural research institutes to develop or expand research farms to improve climate resiliency. The bond language provides that this funding shall not exceed \$1 million per institution and “shall be constructed and maintained with environmentally sustainable infrastructure practices.”

“The Governor’s Proposition 4 expenditure plan, proposed as part of the administration’s January budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year, places this \$15 million in a “pending allocation” category. The Legislative Analyst’s Office noted in a February report that the administration is requesting that the Legislature provide more guidance around its intentions for three bond activities – including the \$15 million for research farms at postsecondary education institutions – for which the Governor’s expenditure plan does not yet include an appropriation timeline.”

The Budget Act of 2025 made the appropriation contingent upon the enactment of this bill. 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.”

Agricultural Research Institutes and experiment stations. The CSU Agricultural Research Institute consists of four member campuses: Fresno, San Luis Obispo, Pomona, and Chico, along with two associate member campuses, Humboldt and Monterey Bay. This multi-campus program focuses on conducting applied agricultural and environmental research. Project categories primarily focus on agricultural business, natural resources, biodiversity, food science, and more. Within the UC system, Agricultural Experiment Stations are housed at UC Berkeley, Davis, Merced, Riverside, and Santa Cruz campuses. These stations engage in land-grant mission research, host outreach and demonstration programs, and collaborate with farmers, suppliers, and other stakeholders in the agricultural industry, which aim to address issues related to agricultural natural resources and health.

This bill establishes a grant program for the purpose of providing state funding to CSU and UC Agricultural Research Institutes and Agricultural Experiment Stations with the goal of expanding research farms. The adopted bond measure and this bill assign the administration of the grant with CDE, even though the program is directed at CSU and UC, which function independently of CDE’s jurisdiction. CDE is required to consult with CDFA in establishing the grant program.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations analysis, this bill would have the following fiscal impact:

- This bill would authorize CDE to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions to develop or expand research farms. The Clean Air

Bond Act of 2024, approved by voters as Proposition 4, provides \$15 million for this purpose. Additionally, Proposition 4 provides that 7 percent of the funds allocated for a grant program may be used to pay for the administrative costs of that program.

- The CDE estimates administrative costs of \$428,000 each year and 1.0 position to provide the grants. To the extent that the set-aside from Proposition 4 is insufficient to cover these costs for the duration of the program, CDE may require future General Fund costs in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Any costs to the CDFA are expected to be minor and absorbable costs.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/14/26)

California State University, Office of the Chancellor

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/14/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 1/29/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, 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, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Gipson, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Valencia

Prepared by: Olgalilia Ramirez / ED. / (916) 651-4105
8/15/26 12:45:38

**** END ****