

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1666 (Rogers)

As Amended May 18, 2026

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Directs the California Natural Resources Agency (NRA) to identify biomass innovation parks to convert California-sourced wood waste into carbon-beneficial products or end uses, and requires numerous state entities to undertake actions related to biomass and wood products.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Requires NRA, in coordination with California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), to identify one or more biomass innovation parks pursuant to developed guidelines.
- 2) Requires NRA to develop guidelines and facilitate a planning process for purposes of identifying parks and guidelines for purposes of soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to develop, operate, and manage a park.
- 3) Requires NRA, in coordination with the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LUCI) and CAL FIRE, to do all of the following:
  - a) Develop regional wood waste availability assessments;
  - b) Develop new, or support existing, public agencies to facilitate long-term forest biomass residues feedstock supply from federal government and nonindustrial private lands; and,
  - c) Adopt a tracking system to trace and authenticate forest biomass origins.
- 4) Requires the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to consider incorporating the use of wood products produced in California in housing grant programs and, if wood products produced in California are incorporated in housing grant programs, shall give preference to wood products produced in California by a California-based company.
- 5) Requires the California Building Standards Commission (BSC) to identify and adopt new measures that incentivize wood products produced in California.
- 6) Establishes the Biomass Innovation Park Grants and Financing Program to be administered by NRA.
- 7) Requires NRA to deliver a report to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2027, containing information pertaining to the biomass innovation park. Sunsets this requirement on January 1, 2032.

**COMMENTS**

California covers about 100 million acres and approximately 40% of the state is forest. State, federal, and private forest operations such as logging, thinning, fuels reduction programs, and ecosystem restoration create a huge amount of woody biomass. Some of this is brought out of the

forest for use, but as much as half of the biomass is left in the forest. When residues from mastication and slash from timber harvests are left scattered throughout the forest, they act as additional dry surface fuel and serve to increase intensity and severity if a wildfire burns through the area. Often woody biomass materials are piled and burned creating air pollution, such as black carbon, or left to decay, creating methane, which has a global warming potential 28 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

Implementing innovative and recommended strategies for forest fuel load reduction and creating end-use markets for biomass can encourage and ideally accelerate healthy forest management to prevent wildfire spread while ideally reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

AB 1666 directs NRA to identify at least one biomass innovation park that processes wood waste that originated in California. Any biomass innovation park identified by the state would be required to use best available control technologies and limited to hosting projects that use a noncombustion technology to convert wood waste into carbon-beneficial products or end uses, including, but not limited to, engineered wood products, biomethane, clean hydrogen, and carbon dioxide removal.

### **According to the Author**

This bill addresses a growing need to manage this wood waste biomass in a sustainable and economically beneficial manner. It centers California in the developing industries of utilizing wood waste for engineered wood products, green hydrogen production, and encourages consolidation of currently disparate efforts. We know there is too much biomass in our natural landscapes and this bill starts us on a path to finally do something about it.

### **Arguments in Support**

Net-Zero California writes that the current main option – direct combustion for electricity – is shown to be a high-cost form of power generation and is not modeled to expand as part of state energy planning processes. In contrast, in its 2022 Scoping Plan, the Air Resources Board identifies a number of non-combustion technologies to manage the state's wood waste problem going forward. These include: durable wood products such as mass timber; zero-carbon fuels such as hydrogen, biomethane, and sustainable aviation fuel; and carbon dioxide removal, such as biochar, biomass burial, or geologic sequestration of carbon dioxide. In support of existing state plans, AB 1666 would establish a number of targeted policies to incubate and scale a sustainable, non-combustion, wood waste bioeconomy in California.

### **Arguments in Opposition**

Center for Biological Diversity argues that appropriating precious funds to benefit a few private businesses that are not helping to address the core intention of Prop 4—wildfire mitigation—while diverting other state resources is the wrong move. California must instead invest in proven solutions like community-focused home hardening, defensible space, mulching/chipping of woody residues, and true renewables-led solutions involving wind and solar.

## **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) NRA estimates General Fund costs of approximately \$365,000 annually for the first three years (for one senior environmental scientist specialist and IT system support) followed by ongoing annual costs of \$240,000 (for the one position).

- 2) LUCI and SGC collectively estimate ongoing annual General Fund costs of approximately \$115,000 to coordinate and consult on activities outlined in the bill.
- 3) BSC anticipates its increased workload to research, develop, and propose for adoption new measures that incentivize engineered wood products pursuant to this bill may range from minor and absorbable to up to approximately \$66,000 annually (for 25% of an associate architect's time).
- 4) HCD estimates increased costs of an unknown amount to incorporate the use of and give preference to California-sourced wood products in its housing grant programs (General Fund or special fund).
- 5) CAL FIRE did not have a cost estimate available for the Appropriations Committee.
- 6) CDFA, DOC, and the California Energy Commission anticipate minor and absorbable costs (various funds).

**VOTES**

**ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 13-0-1**

**YES:** Bryan, Ellis, Alanis, Connolly, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Macedo, Muratsuchi, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Zbur

**ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4**

**YES:** Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

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

**UPDATED**

VERSION: May 18, 2026

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FN: 0002760