

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1848 (Ransom) – As Introduced February 11, 2026

Policy Committee: Agriculture

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to increase the annual seed registration fee, as specified.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Authorizes the secretary of CDFA, after consulting with the Seed Advisory Board (board), to increase the annual seed registration fee from \$40 to \$100 for each fiscal year or portion of a fiscal year beginning July 1.
- 2) Authorizes the secretary, on and after January 1, 2028, after consulting with the board, to annually increase the fee by up to \$50 for each fiscal year or portion of a fiscal year beginning July 1, not to exceed \$300.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

This bill will likely result in increased revenue (Food and Agriculture Fund) to CDFA's Seed Services Program. In fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, CDFA collected about \$24,000 in registration fees from 611 registrants. This bill incrementally increases the fee, and CDFA projects the following revenue amounts in subsequent years: \$56,000 in FY 2028-29 (\$150 fee), \$84,000 in FY 2029-30 (\$150 fee), \$112,000 in FY 2030-31 (\$200 fee), \$140,000 in FY 2031-32 (\$250 fee), and \$168,000 in FY 2032-33 (\$300 fee cap).

The Seed Services Program has an average total revenue of approximately \$2.2 million – this includes the annual registration fee (which this bill proposes to increase), assessment revenue, and late fees. These revenues fund the Seed Services Program's activities, and total annual revenue approximately equals total expenditures.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

California Seed Law requires seed companies to register with CDFA and pay a fee to cover costs associated with the inspection and monitoring program. The fee, which has not been increased since its establishment in 1973, is no longer adequate and must be adjusted to sustain this important program. The seed monitoring and inspection programs funded by these fees protect farmers from costly crop

failures, promote fair competition among seed sellers, and maintain the reliability of California's agricultural supply chain.

- 2) **Background.** According to CDFA, poor quality seeds can cost farmers and home gardeners considerable amounts of time, money, and resources by way of reduced yields, poor crop quality, and contamination by weeds or other unwanted species. The California Seed Law directs the department's seed services program to regulate the marketing of seeds so that quality information is accessible and accurate, test for seed purity and germination through sampling, investigate seed complaints and attempt to resolve buyer-seller disputes through mediation, work to prevent the transmission of noxious weed seeds through seed products, and support research and development of seed biotechnology.

In California, seed labelers and manufacturers must register annually with CDFA to obtain authorization to sell agricultural or vegetable seed. Since 1973, this fee has been \$40 per fiscal year. According to the Assembly Agriculture Committee, in the intervening 50 years, costs have grown significantly and seed manufacturers have consolidated, leading to fewer manufacturers paying a less meaningful fee.

This bill is sponsored by the California Seed Association, which argues this bill provides the resources needed to administer and enforce California's seed law:

The current annual registration fee was established in 1973 and has not been increased since. \$40. The bill provides a one time increase to \$100, would allow the Secretary, after consulting with the Seed Advisory Board, to increase that fee annually to a maximum not to exceed \$300. This measured, tiered approach provides a reasonable path for future adjustments while preserving oversight and industry input.

We also support AB 1848 because the Seed Advisory Board plays an important oversight role in the program. Under existing law, the Board advises the Secretary on seed law and regulations, enforcement, seed laboratory diagnostics, annual budgets, and recommended assessment levels needed to support the program.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Nikita Koraddi / APPR. / (916) 319-2081