

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1891 (Connolly)

As Amended June 25, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to allocate at least 10% of the funding appropriated to CAL FIRE for local assistance and other grant programs where prescribed or beneficial fire is an eligible activity, to expand training, organizational capacity, and support for community-led beneficial fire programs, and requires at least 25% of that allocation be awarded to California Native American tribes or tribally led or indigenous-led organizations.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Strike the 10% earmark from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund appropriation to CAL FIRE and instead require 10% of any funds appropriated to CAL FIRE for local assistance and other grant programs where prescribed or beneficial fire is an eligible activity for specified activities.
- 2) Authorize CAL FIRE to award less than 10% minimum allocation only in circumstances where the total funding requested by qualified applicants does not reach the minimum allocation.
- 3) Require CAL FIRE, to the extent feasible under grants, programs, and other mechanisms, to develop metrics for program success other than acres treated, such as the number of people trained to engage in beneficial fire and the number of new certified burn bosses, and determine program success based on those metrics.
- 4) Require CAL FIRE to use the maximum flexibility provided for by law to allow for longer grant or award terms that support long-term capacity and planning.

COMMENTS

Science strongly points to the need to re-establish more frequent fire across a significant part of the state. In significant parts of California, reintroduction of fire in controlled circumstances can limit the scope of catastrophic wildfire and improve ecosystem resilience. In many ecosystems, beneficial fire may be the only restoration tool available.

California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire (March 2022) estimates that between 10 and 30 million acres in California would benefit from some form of fuel reduction treatment and sets a target for deploying beneficial fire on 400,000 acres annually. Prescribed burns are safe: the US Forest Service reported in 2022 that 99.84% of prescribed burns operate as planned without incident.

Recognizing the importance of prescribed fire, SB 901 (Dodd), Chapter 626, Statutes of 2018, established the precedent for appropriating \$200 million to CAL FIRE from the GGRF through FY 2023–24 fiscal year, including \$35 million to complete prescribed fire and other fuel reduction projects through proven forestry practices consistent with the recommendations of the Forest Carbon Plan.

SB 155 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 258, Statutes of 2021, extended SB 901's continuous appropriations to CAL FIRE through FY 2028-29 for those same forest health, fire prevention, and fuel reduction projects.

This bill requires CAL FIRE to allocate at least 10% of the funding appropriated to CAL FIRE for local assistance and other grant programs where prescribed or beneficial fire is an eligible activity, to expand training, organizational capacity, and support for community-led beneficial fire programs, and requires at least 25% of that allocation be awarded to California Native American tribes or tribally led or indigenous-led organizations.

According to the Author

AB 1891 sets aside 10% of the GGRF allocated to CAL FIRE for wildfire resiliency and forest health to support beneficial fire, with 25% of that dedicated specifically to tribes and tribal organizations. Beneficial fire has been a proven practice utilized by California's first peoples for thousands of years. The evidence is clear, beneficial fire projects help our ecosystems foster biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, and preserve natural habitats and forests. It is time we expand these practices and give California another tool to help make our state more resilient to wildfires and natural disasters.

Arguments in Support

A large coalition of stakeholders, including forest health, environmental, agricultural, and local government advocates, write that the current lack of a dedicated funding source for tribal and community-based beneficial fire projects is a major barrier to the effective implementation of this proven and critical wildfire mitigation strategy. State investment in beneficial fire capacity is critical for forest health, wildfire mitigation, and human safety. The program created by this bill will support this essential work and protect communities, restore ecosystems, sustain Indigenous land stewardship practices, and prepare our state for the rising risk of catastrophic wildfire.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) CAL FIRE estimates ongoing costs of \$354,000 in the first year, \$392,000 in the second, and \$371,000 annually thereafter (Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund [GGRF]) to implement the provisions of this bill.
- 2) The California Air Resources Board estimates ongoing costs of \$391,000 annually (GGRF) to develop quantification and reporting materials specific to the new projects for agencies administering California Climate Investments (CCI) programs; conduct additional outreach in disadvantaged communities, including within lands under the control of federally recognized tribes, to inform community members about investment opportunities available through CCI; provide ongoing guidance, including quantification guidance and support; and assist with outreach and engagement, especially to tribes and indigenous-led organizations.
- 3) By requiring CAL FIRE to use at least 10% of its funding appropriated for local assistance and other grant programs where prescribed or beneficial fire is an eligible activity to implement the Beneficial Fire Capacity Program, this bill would create ongoing cost

pressures of an unknown amount on CAL FIRE's funding allocation to the extent the proposed set-aside in the bill diverts resources away from projects that would otherwise have received funding from CAL FIRE. According to CAL FIRE, its grant programs are consistently oversubscribed.

VOTES:**ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0**

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

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0-2

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, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

UPDATED

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