

Date of Hearing: March 23, 2026

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

Isaac G. Bryan, Chair

AB 1893 (Gallagher and Schultz) – As Introduced February 12, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Wildfire prevention: local assistance grant program: eligible activities

**SUMMARY:** Expands the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (CAL FIRE) local assistance grant program for fire prevention and home hardening education activities to include projects undertaken by a local governmental entity involving the acquisition or installation of mobile rigid dip tanks or similar mobile and permanent infrastructure that is capable of providing helicopter-accessible water supplies for firefighting response or suppression purposes in very high and high fire hazard severity zones or by a local agency.

**EXISTING LAW,** pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) 4124.5:

- 1) Requires CAL FIRE to establish a local assistance grant program for fire prevention and home hardening education activities in California. Eligible groups for grants include local agencies, resource conservation districts, fire safe councils, the California Conservation Corps, certified community conservation corps, University of California Cooperative Extension, the Board of Commissioners under California Volunteers, Native American tribes, and qualified nonprofit organizations.
- 2) Requires the local assistance grant program to establish a robust year-round fire prevention effort in and near fire-threatened communities that focuses on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Requires CAL FIRE to prioritize, to the extent feasible, projects that are multiyear efforts.
- 3) Requires eligible activities to include, but not be limited to, all of the following:
  - a) Development and implementation of public education and outreach programs. Programs may include technical assistance, new technologies, game elements to enhance and accelerate the education of property owners, workforce recruitment and training, and equipment purchases;
  - b) Fire prevention activities, as defined;
  - c) Projects to improve compliance with defensible space requirements;
  - d) Technical assistance to local agencies to improve fire prevention and reduce fire hazards;
  - e) Creation of additional “Firewise USA” communities in the state or other community planning or certification programs deemed as appropriate by CAL FIRE;
  - f) Projects to improve public safety, including, but not limited to, access to emergency equipment and improvements to public evacuation routes;
  - g) Vegetation management along roadways and driveways to reduce fire risk;

- h) Public education outreach regarding making homes and communities more wildfire resilient, including training on defensible space and prescribed grazing;
- i) Projects to reduce the flammability of structures and communities to prevent their ignition from wind-driven embers;
- j) Development of a risk reduction checklist for communities that includes defensible space criteria, structural vulnerability potential, and personal evacuation plans; and,
- k) Projects involving the application of prescribed grazing, which may include the installation of fencing or watering improvements.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

1) **Author’s statement:**

Wildfire prevention must include every effective tool available. AB 1893 ensures that mobile rigid dip tanks, permanent dip tanks, and similar helicopter-accessible water supplies—proven to reduce response times and save lives—can qualify for wildfire prevention grants. This targeted clarification strengthens local firefighting capabilities without imposing new mandates or additional spending.

2) **Wildfires.** In CAL FIRE’s 2020 Fire Siege Report, the Director states, “at the end of 2020, we closed the book on, arguably, the worst fire year ever experienced on the west coast, and specifically in California.” While fewer wildfires threatened California in 2023 due to the increased number of weather events and atmospheric rivers, the vegetative growth from the significant rainfall contributed to devastating wildfires in 2024 and 2025. In 2024, the Park Fire became the fourth-largest fire in California’s history. Despite aggressive initial attack suppression efforts, the fire rapidly expanded, ultimately consuming 429,603 acres across Butte and Tehama counties.

3) **Los Angeles fires.** On January 7, 2025, multiple mega fires erupted in Los Angeles (LA) in Eaton and Pacific Palisades. As firefighters were contending with the extraordinary circumstances with strong winds and bone-dry conditions, the local water systems got overwhelmed and failed. Three million gallons of water (enough water to cover 2 football fields in a foot of water) were stored in three large tanks for fire hydrants in the area before the Palisades fire, but the supply was exhausted because of the extraordinary nature of this urban-wildland fire. Because of the high water demand fighting multiple fires concurrently, pump stations at lower elevations did not have enough pressure to refill tanks at higher elevations, and the ongoing fire hampered the ability of crews to access the pumps. The issue wasn’t water shortage; Orange County Water District, which supplies groundwater to the north half of the county, had enough supply to carry its 2.5 million customers through the worst of any potential droughts for 3 to 5 years. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California — which serves 19 million people mostly with imported water — also had an abundance, “with a record 3.8 million acre-feet of water in storage.” That’s enough water to supply 40 million people for a year. Also, reservoirs were full, but they were not close to the fire, thus taking a herculean effort to transport the amount of water needed in order to be effective.

Public water systems are not designed for catastrophic wildfires. Fire hydrants are used to extinguish 1-2 structure fires, not wildland fires. (Wildland firefighters don't use hydrants — they use water tenders.)

California water agencies are increasingly positioned to support firefighting through infrastructure that enhances access to water supplies for aerial crews. This is vital in urban-wildland interface areas lacking conventional sources. The author notes that mobile and permanent systems reduce response times and improve suppression, resilience, and effectiveness.

- 4) **Firefighting water supplies.** Firefighting helicopters use dip tanks when other water sources are not an option. Dip tanks cut the distances that helicopters must travel to the nearest body of water, help when the local water source is not deep enough, or alleviate the environmental concerns with using local water. Dip tanks come in many sizes and shapes and are mobile so they can be positioned for optimum access and effect during a fire incident.

According to the author's office, permanent infrastructure costs about \$300,000-400,000 per unit. Mobile infrastructure costs about \$75,000 per unit, which includes the trailer to make them mobile. There are advantages to each kind of infrastructure and different geographies really drive the analysis about which is a better fit for permanent vs. mobile.

Several dozen local governments have acquired and/or installed permanent or mobile firefighting infrastructure. The Crescenta Valley Water District owns a mobile unit, which is regularly borrowed and used elsewhere in Los Angeles County or in other counties. Jurupa Community Services District, San Geronimo Pass Water Agency, Yorba Linda Water District, Fallbrook Public Utility District, and Rainbow Municipal Water District are a handful of agencies that are known to currently own and utilize helicopter-accessible water supply infrastructure; most of these are of the permanent variety (not the mobile rigid dip tank).

These infrastructure needs are regularly showcased at trade associations, in newsletters, at ribbon-cuttings, etc., and numerous local governments including cities, special districts, fire agencies, neighborhood fire councils, and others continue to express that they would like such infrastructure but wouldn't know where to find the funding for them. According to the author's office, the demand would easily be in the hundreds of units if funding were available.

- 5) **Local assistance grant program.** The Wildfire Resilience Program pursuant to PRC 4124.5 is tasked with assisting nonindustrial timberland owners with wildfire resilience efforts by providing technical and financial assistance for their forest management needs. The Wildfire Resilience Program includes several state forestry assistance programs within CAL FIRE that share the goal of improving the health and productivity of private forest lands and reducing the threat posed from wildland fires. According to CAL FIRE, over the last six years, CAL FIRE has awarded more than \$566 million in Wildfire Prevention Grants to more than 575 projects across the state.

The Wildfire Prevention Grants Program is funded as part of the state's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Strategy, in part with Cap-and-Invest auction proceeds administered with Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund moneys. For FY 2025-26, CAL FIRE's granted

Wildfire Grant Prevention \$62.7 million for 84 grants, ranging from \$63,000 to \$949,000; the average grant amount was \$750,000.

AB 1893 provides the statutory basis for CAL FIRE and the State Office of Emergency Services to include helicopter-accessible water supply infrastructure as eligible activities in guidelines for future wildfire prevention grant funding opportunities and programs. The bill further intends to provide clarity that dip tanks, useful for fire suppression, would be eligible for funding under this grant program.

- 6) **Double referral.** This bill is also referred to the Assembly Emergency Management Committee.
- 7) **Related legislation.** SB 90 (Seyarto, 2025) includes in the list of eligible projects under the \$135 million wildfire mitigation grant program, authorized pursuant to Proposition 4, improvements to public evacuation routes in very high and high fire hazard severity zones, mobile rigid dip tanks, as defined, to support firefighting efforts, prepositioned mobile rigid water storage, as defined, and improvements to the response and effectiveness of fire engines and helicopters. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

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| Bellflower Somerset Mutual Water Company | Rainbow Municipal Water District            |
| Crescenta Valley Water District          | Rancho California Water District            |
| Cucamonga Valley Water District          | Rowland Water District                      |
| Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District | Rubio Canon Land and Water Association      |
| Fallbrook Public Utility District        | San Gabriel County Water District           |
| Jurupa Community Services District       | San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District |
| Kinneloa Irrigation District             | San Geronio PASS Water Agency               |
| LA Habra Heights County Water District   | Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency           |
| Las Virgenes Municipal Water District    | Southern California Water Coalition         |
| Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster       | Valencia Heights Water Company              |
| Montebello Land and Water Company        | Valley County Water District                |
| Paradise Irrigation District             | Walnut Valley Water District                |
| Pico Water District                      | West Valley Water District                  |
| Quartz Hill Water District               | Western Municipal Water District            |

**Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Paige Brokaw / NAT. RES. /