
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1960
Author: Bennett (D), et al.
Amended: 8/19/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/23/26

AYES: Becker, Seyarto, Allen, Laird, Stern

NO VOTE RECORDED: Cabaldon, Grove

SENATE EMERGENCY MGT. COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/30/26

AYES: Stern, Seyarto, Allen, Ashby, Blakespear, Grayson, Pérez

NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle, Rubio

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

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

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-2, 5/21/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Wildfire Prevention Grants Program: identified cohesive fire communities

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill 1) requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (the Department), in consultation with the State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee, to establish a wildfire mitigation validation program to provide voluntary official recognition to a community that achieves progress toward community-scale wildfire preparedness and mitigations; 2) authorizes the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to disburse funds appropriated for the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to identified communities that partner with fire safe councils to use for activities related to hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education; and 3) requires the Department, commencing with the 2028-29 fiscal year, to prioritize disadvantaged cohesive fire communities.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/19/26 make conforming changes; and transitioned the proposed “identified cohesive fire community program” to be operated by state or private entities into a specific program at the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law sunsets the California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP) on July 1, 2029.

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Department), in consultation with the State Fire Marshal (SFM)’s Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) to establish a wildfire mitigation validation program to provide voluntary official recognition to a community that achieves progress towards community-scale wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- 2) Requires the Department, in consultation with WMAC, to set the wildfire mitigations.
- 3) Requires the Department, in consultation with WMAC, to set the minimum percentage of mitigations required to achieve recognition in this program and requires the Department to set increases in those percentages to incentivize continued community-scale preparedness.
- 4) Authorizes the Department, commencing with the 2028-29 fiscal year, to disburse funds appropriated for the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to recognized communities that partner with fire safe councils or other eligible groups to use for activities related to hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education, among other activities.
- 5) Specifies that, for the purposes of the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program distribution, a fire safe council shall be the entity the applies to the department for grant funding and receives and manages any awarded funding.
- 6) Authorizes the Department to award preference to disadvantaged recognized communities pursuant to the Department’s established procedures for prioritizing disadvantaged applicants for the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program.
- 7) Specifies that qualification as a recognized community shall not be used for the purposes of insurance.

Background

Wildfire Prevention Grants. Administered by the Department, the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program funds projects in and near fire threatened communities to improve public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Home hardening. The Department and California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) are authorized to enter into a joint powers agreement to administer a Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program.

Incentivizing individual home hardening. This bill would provide an incentive for individual homeowners to undertake work to harden their home, by providing for a hardened community to be eligible for grants that may further protect their neighborhood from wildfire.

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

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the fiscal analysis reflects a previous version of this bill:

- By authorizing the Department to provide wildfire prevention grants to identified cohesive fire communities (ICFCs) that partner with fire safe councils, and providing that disadvantaged ICFCs receive preference under CalFire's established procedures for prioritizing disadvantaged applicants, this bill would create cost pressures of an unknown amount possibly in the hundreds of thousands to low millions of dollars annually, on the wildfire prevention grant program (General Fund, special fund such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund [GGRF], or bond funds such as the Proposition 4 climate bond) to the extent there is increased demand for funding from eligible communities.
- The Department reports its administrative costs to implement this bill are absorbable within existing resources.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/19/26)

Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Berkeley; City of
California Fire Chiefs Association
Clean Power Alliance
Consumer Watchdog
County of Ventura
Fire Aside, INC
Fire Districts Association of California

Matador Fire
Megafire Action
Orange County Fire Authority

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/19/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author, “Last year, we watched entire communities destroyed by ferocious wildfires. As California continues to grapple with more frequent, intense, and destructive wildfires, we need to ensure whole neighborhoods won’t be decimated. AB 1960 allows CAL FIRE to disperse Wildfire Prevention Grant funding to communities that have reached at least a certain number of homes hardened. This bill incentivizes California’s communities to reduce risk together, rather than one home at a time. Through strategic planning, retrofitting, and engagement, Californians will decrease property loss and become more resilient in the face of climate change.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-2, 5/21/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Hadwick, Tangipa

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Chen, Gallagher, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez, Wilson

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