

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1960 (Bennett)

As Amended August 19, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), in consultation with the State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC), 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 CAL FIRE, commencing with the 2028-29 fiscal year, 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) authorizes CAL FIRE to prioritize disadvantaged cohesive fire communities.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Strike certification by a home hardening certification program developed by an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit and instead require the 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 mitigations.
- 2) Strike specified minimum percentage mitigation targets and instead require CAL FIRE, in consultation with the WMAC, to set the minimum percentage of mitigations required to achieve recognition and set increases in those percentages to incentivize continued community-scale preparedness
- 3) Require CAL FIRE to base recognition upon objective, verifiable, and periodically reviewed wildfire mitigation criteria supported by publicly available methodology and data.
- 4) Authorize, instead of require, CAL FIRE to prioritize disadvantaged communities.
- 5) Provide that qualification as a recognized community shall not be used for purposes of the business of insurance, and shall not establish actuarial justification for insurance rate adjustments, catastrophe model modifications, underwriting changes, or mitigation credits absent supporting empirical and statistical evidence.

COMMENTS

CAL FIRE's Wildfire Grants Program is a broad set of competitive grants to fund wildfire prevention and related activities, which includes the wildfire prevention grants funded by California Climate Investments (cap-and-trade funds) and other state appropriations. These grants enable local organizations like fire safe councils, to implement activities that address the hazards of wildfire and reduce wildfire risk to communities, including hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire planning, education and outreach, and other ecosystem-based activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect public health. Under AB 1960, recognized communities that achieve specified home hardening percentages could apply for funding through that program via a Fire Safe Council.

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 50% 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.

Arguments in Support

Fire Aside writes, "We support AB 1960 because grant programs that reach communities most exposed to wildfire risk are among the highest-leverage tools available to fire agencies ... Fire Aside supports this bill because it aligns with our experience that community-level action, properly resourced and coordinated, produces measurable improvements in the defensible space and home hardening outcomes that ultimately determine whether homes survive a wildfire."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, 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 for local assistance grant funds from CAL FIRE. CAL FIRE reports its administrative costs to implement this bill are absorbable within existing resources.

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

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

ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 5-2-0

YES: Ransom, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon

NO: Hadwick, DeMaio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-1-0

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

NO: Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-2-8

YES: 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

NO: Hadwick, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Chen, Gallagher, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez, Wilson

UPDATED

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