
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2037 (Patterson) - Wildfire Mitigation Aging and Disability Grant Pilot Program

Version: May 18, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: HUMAN S. 5 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 2037 would establish the Wildfire Mitigation Aging and Disability Grant Pilot Program.

Fiscal Impact:

- The California Department of Aging (CDA) estimates costs of \$626,000 in 2027-28 and \$476,000 in 2028-29 and in 2029-30 for staffing resources and outreach activities (General Fund).
- Unknown General Fund costs to provide grants. The CDA indicates that as a baseline, the average California Wildfire Mitigation Program grant amount per project was \$682,000. Also, the Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Grant Program will distribute \$30 million to regional awardees to strengthen local capacity, improve landscape health and resilience, and reduce wildfire risk to communities. Each regional awardee is eligible to receive between \$5 million and \$20 million to fund landscape resilience treatments in forested and non-forested areas, clearing hazardous vegetation near homes and infrastructure, prescribed and cultural fire, pest management, reforestation and revegetation, biomass utilization, and maintenance of prior resilience efforts. The CDA anticipates each of the participating pilots could require similar funding levels, depending on interest and participation.
- Unknown General Fund cost pressures to expand or continue the pilot program beyond the sunset date.

Background:

Area Agencies on Aging. The CDA administers programs that serve older adults and adults with disabilities throughout the State. The CDA contracts with a network of 33 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) that directly manage a wide array of federal and state-funded services such as meals; help with finding employment; supportive services to assist older individuals as well as younger adults with disabilities to live as independently as possible; promoting healthy aging and community involvement; and supporting family members in their vital care giving role. Each county is required to have an AAA to ensure all communities have access to local aging programs and provide information and services for older adults. AAAs operate within a Planning and Service Area, which can include multiple counties. Planning and Service Area 4 covers Sacramento, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties; Planning and Service Area 29 covers El Dorado County; and Planning and Service Area 33 covers Kern County.

California Wildfire Mitigation Program. Current law requires the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to oversee the development of the California Wildfire Mitigation Program. The program focuses on cost-effective structure hardening and retrofitting to create fire-resistant homes as well as defensible space and vegetation management activities. The program offers financial assistance to vulnerable populations in wildfire prone areas. Areas to implement this program were chosen after Cal OES and CAL FIRE conducted a statewide analysis of areas with high wildfire risk and high social vulnerability (residents over age 65, residents in poverty, residents with a disability, residents with limited English, and residents without a car).

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Establish the Wildfire Mitigation Aging and Disability Grant Pilot Program to allow seniors and individuals with disabilities to mitigate against wildfires on properties they own that they would not otherwise be able to take with existing resources.
- Require the CDA to administer the pilot program through Planning and Service Areas 4, 29, and 33.
- Require the AAAs to award grants on a competitive basis; and provide that an applicant is eligible for a grant if all of the following criteria are met:
 - The applicant is an older adult or individual with a disability.
 - The applicant occupies the property as a primary residence.
 - The applicant owns or lawfully occupies the property.
 - The property is in a designated moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity zone under the CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps.
- Provide that services may include, but are not limited to, costs associated with hiring contractors or other qualified service providers to perform wildfire mitigation activities; and specify that grant funding may be used to support any of the following:
 - Vegetation management and defensible space creation.
 - Tree trimming or removal of hazardous or dead trees.
 - Removal and lawful disposal of combustible debris from roofs, gutters, and areas adjacent to structures.
 - Installation of ember-resistant vents or other exterior hardening measures.
- Condition implementation only upon an appropriation by the Legislature.
- Sunset the bill's provisions on January 1, 2030.

-- END --