

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 2075 (Bennett)

As Amended April 15, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Establishes new fire safety and equipment standards for a person operating an internal combustion engine in fire prone areas and requires the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) to adopt certain emergency regulations.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the Board, for timber operations on timberland conducted by a timber operator, to adopt emergency regulations that define the terms "operating area" and "point accessible in the event of a fire" in the forest practice rules and define the necessary number and types of tools that may be used to extinguish ignitions in an area of operation.
- 2) Revises the conditions under which a person is prohibited from using or operating specified equipment from which a spark, fire, or flame may originate on certain lands without additionally maintaining at least one backpack pump-type fire extinguisher fully equipped and ready for use and a sufficient number of serviceable round point shovels with an overall length of not less than 46 inches so that each person at the operation is equipped to fight fire, within the operating area, at a point accessible in the event of fire.
- 3) Requires that these fire tools be no farther than 25 feet from the point of operation of the power saw or tool with unrestricted access for the operator from the point of operation.
- 4) Provides that these requirements do not apply to a person operating a motorized vehicle to work on, clear, or grade any land in or near specified lands during any time of the year when burning permits are required, and instead requires the person to have in or affixed to the motor vehicle and ready for immediate use one serviceable round point shovel and one fully equipped fire extinguisher.
- 5) Defines "person" as a natural person, partnership, firm, association, corporation, limited liability company, or other legal entity.

COMMENTS

Internal combustion engine-powered equipment, whether fueled by gasoline, diesel, propane, natural gas, or other fuels, can act as ignition sources. Without proper precautions, industrial machinery can quickly turn a small spark into a large, uncontrollable wildfire. Current law prohibits a person from using internal combustion engine-powered equipment on an industrial operation located on or near any forest, brush, or grass-covered land between April 1 and December 1 of any year, or at any other time when ground litter and vegetation will sustain combustion permitting the spread of fire, without providing and maintaining, for firefighting purposes only, suitable and serviceable tools in the specified amounts, manner and location.

Current law requires the availability of a sealed box of tools onsite of an industrial operation to be accessible in the event of fire onsite. The fire toolbox is required to contain one backpack pump-type fire extinguisher filled with water, two axes, two McLeod fire tools, and a sufficient

number of shovels so that each employee at the operation can be equipped to fight fire. These requirements were enacted in 1971 and have not been updated since.

This bill specifies the required placement of mandatory fire extinguishing equipment and standardizes the entity responsible for compliance across several statutes.

The author's office states that statutory ambiguity also places responsibility for some violations on individuals, but not on the business entities who hire them, although business entities are best positioned to ensure compliance. Clarifications to these laws can make liability and personal responsibility clearer. This bill is also referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee, which will further analyze this component of the bill.

According to the Author

With climate change increasing the frequency and intensity of wildfires, California needs clarity regarding who to hold accountable when an accidental fire breaks out during an outdoor operation. AB 2075 clarifies fire safety standards during operations on or near any forest, brush, or grass-covered land and ensures companies performing such activities clearly know what they can be held liable for in the event a fire occurs. This bill is a commonsense measure to protect workers and guarantee justice for fire victims.

Arguments in Support

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office writes that AB 2075 standardizes and clarified responsibility for compliance across multiple sections of the Public Resources Code, making clear that compliance rests not only on the individual worker but also with the businesses entity responsible for the operation.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill would result in one-time costs of an unknown amount, ranging from minor and absorbable to potentially in excess of \$150,000 (General Fund or special fund), for the Board to adopt emergency regulations as required by this bill. The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, which houses the Board, did not have a cost estimate available at the time of the writing of this analysis.

VOTES

ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0

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

ASM JUDICIARY: 12-0-0

YES: Kalra, Macedo, Bauer-Kahan, Bryan, Connolly, Dixon, Harabedian, Pacheco, Papan, Sanchez, Stefani, Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

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

UPDATED

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