

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
AB 2326 (Committee on Agriculture) – As Introduced February 19, 2026

Policy Committee: Agriculture

Vote: 8 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill extends the sunset on the operation of the Broomrape Program within the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) from July 1, 2028, to July 1, 2030.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Ongoing annual costs to CDFA in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to continue operating the Broomrape Program until July 1, 2030 (Broomrape Management Account – housed in the Food and Agriculture Fund). As discussed below, CDFA has established an assessment of \$0.14 per ton of processing tomatoes produced in each district to be paid equally by the producer and handler to fund the program. CDFA reports it is continuing to work with the industry to establish and grow the program. The department has allocated initial staffing to support permitting, rulemaking, compliance, and research needs. Depending on program funding and needs, CDFA notes its staffing could fluctuate in the future. Overall program costs between fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26 were approximately \$1.2 million (not yet fully covered by the industry assessment.) CDFA projects approximately \$535,000 in program costs for the current year.

COMMENTS:

Broomrape is a root parasitic plant that can cause devastating damage to tomatoes and other broadleaf crops by fusing into a host plant root and extracting nutrients and water. Broomrape was the focus of an eradication effort in California four decades ago but has recently reemerged in tomato fields across several Central Valley counties. The discovery of broomrape in commercial tomato fields leads to quarantine and crop destruction without harvest, as processors will not accept tomatoes from an infested field. According to CDFA, susceptible food crops, with an economic value totaling \$6 billion, may experience up to 70% annual crop losses in areas infested with broomrape.

AB 402 (Aguiar-Curry), Chapter 651, Statutes of 2023, established the Broomrape Program within CDFA for the purpose of funding research and control methods for Broomrape. Among other things, AB 402 created a Broomrape Board and required the board to recommend an assessment rate for approval by the CDFA secretary. In 2025, CDFA established an assessment of \$0.14 per ton of processing tomatoes produced in each district to be paid equally by the producer and handler.

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