

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2499 (Gipson) – As Amended April 13, 2026

Policy Committee:	Public Safety	Vote:	7 - 0
	Labor and Employment		7 - 0

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: Yes                      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to take various detailed actions regarding climate control and working conditions in prisons.

Specifically, this bill, among other provisions:

- 1) Requires the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) to submit, by July 1, 2027, a rulemaking proposal for the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board’s (OSHSB’s) review and adoption applicable to workers in a prison or institution under CDCR jurisdiction and requires CDCR to comply with a related order, rule, or regulation adopted by OSHSB.
- 2) Requires CDCR to take various detailed actions regarding climate control and working conditions in prisons and establish, by April 1, 2027, interim relief measures during excessive weather events.
- 3) Requires CDCR to establish, by May 1, 2027, a working group consisting of certain representatives, including from Cal/OSHA, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and CDCR, to ensure implementation of relief measures.
- 4) Requires CDCR to develop and implement, by July 1, 2027, annual training for all staff on preventing, identifying, and managing heat-related illnesses and protocols to monitor air quality during wildfire events and other air quality emergencies.
- 5) Requires CDCR to establish with existing resources, by July 1, 2027, a Temperature Monitoring and Data Transparency Pilot Program in at least three prisons in distinct climate zones, under which CDCR must collect certain temperature data and provide weekly and quarterly summary data from digital sensors to the OIG, Cal/OSHA, and the Legislature.
- 6) Requires CDCR to develop, by January 1, 2028, temperature monitoring protocols and a phased plan to implement climate resilience measures in correctional facilities submitted to the Legislature and Department of Finance (DOF).
- 7) Requires CDCR to implement, by July 1, 2028, upon appropriation, implementation protocols for colder climates and a plan to ensure living quarters, work areas, and recreational spaces at correctional facilities are equipped with cooling systems, as well as other emergency response protocols.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Likely costs in the tens of billions of dollars to CDCR for facility improvements to housing units and ancillary buildings, installation of temperature monitoring systems, installation and updating of heating and cooling systems, and installation of air filtration systems, among other required capital improvements (General Fund (GF)). In addition, CDCR will likely incur significant ongoing costs in staff workload to conduct monitoring, health assessments, and recordkeeping, and to update and implement policies in compliance with this bill (GF). If Cal/OSHA regulations are approved, CDCR will likely also incur unknown but significant costs for compliance with the workplace standards established in the regulations (GF).
- 2) Costs of approximately \$750,000 to \$1 million per year during the rulemaking process to Cal/OSHA and OSHSB collectively (Occupational Safety and Health Fund (OSFH)). Additionally, ongoing costs in the low millions of dollars to Cal/OSHA to enforce the rule, dependent on the number of complaints filed by covered workers (OSHF). Cal/OSHA will also incur likely absorbable costs to serve on the working group.
- 3) Absorbable costs to the OIG to receive and review temperature data and serve on the working group (GF).

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of GF structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year (FY) and ongoing.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

California has a responsibility to ensure that every individual in its care is housed in safe and humane conditions. As climate impacts intensify, dangerously high temperatures and poor air quality in our state prisons are putting lives at risk and exposing individuals to preventable harm. This measure establishes clear, enforceable standards to protect health, uphold basic dignity, and ensure accountability within our correctional system.

This bill is sponsored by Worksafe and supported by civil rights, criminal justice reform, and legal aid groups.

- 2) **Background. *Working Conditions.*** After years of development, in June 2024, OSHSB approved regulations that establish a heat illness prevention standard for indoor workplaces in California. The regulations apply to most workplaces where the indoor temperature reaches 82 degrees Fahrenheit and require employers covered by the regulations to prevent worker exposure to the risk of heat illness. However, these regulations do not apply to CDCR facilities. According to reporting by CalMatters, just before the regulations were expected to be approved, DOF withheld approval for the regulations because DOF revised estimates and determined it would cost "billions of dollars" for CDCR to comply with the regulations. OSHSB exempted CDCR from the 2024 regulations and indicated a separate rulemaking process to set heat standards for prisons and jails. This bill requires Cal/OSHA to submit a rulemaking proposal to OSHSB regarding heat standards for workers in CDCR facilities and lists numerous factors that must be considered by Cal/OSHA in drafting the

proposal. This bill also requires CDCR to comply with any order, rule, or regulation adopted by OSHSB as a result of the proposed rulemaking.

***Climate Control.*** CDCR operates 31 prisons across the state. According to CDCR:

Most of CDCR's institutions were built at a time in which the comfort level of the incarcerated population was not a consideration or priority. As such, many housing units and support buildings throughout the state were originally equipped with only air handling units or evaporative cooling systems; neither of which are sufficient to provide adequate relief from excessive heat during summer months. Although there have been efforts to retrofit several housing units and various buildings used for rehabilitative programs at multiple institutions over the years, a significant number remain that require air-cooling upgrades or other alternatives to address rising indoor temperatures.

The Budget Act of 2025 included \$17.6 million GF in FY 2025-26 and \$20 million in FY 2026-27 to initiate an air cooling pilot program at three prisons to evaluate the effectiveness of various air cooling alternatives, as well as provisional budget bill language to report outcomes to the Legislature. This bill requires CDCR to take immediate and long-term steps to upgrade facilities to mitigate the effects of extreme weather related to climate change.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1424 (C. Rodriguez) is similar to this bill, except this bill includes specific timelines for CDCR to implement even more detailed climate solutions. AB 1424 was held on this committee's suspense file.

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