

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 2513 (Petrie-Norris)

As Amended April 16, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Amends various state grant programs to authorize administering agencies to directly award regional landscape grants to regional entities.

Major Provisions

- 1) Authorizes the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to award regional landscape grants to regional entities (as defined) to implement regional priority strategies developed pursuant to the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFC); requires WCB, before it issues these grants, to, in collaboration with the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force), establish guidelines for funding regional landscape grants to help achieve the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, as specified; and exempts the development and adoption of these guidelines from the Administrative Procedure Act.
- 2) Expands eligible activities under the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) local assistance grant program to include manual vegetation management and modification, ignition prevention activities, creation of fuel breaks, replacement of ignition-prone nonnative flashy fuels with heavier and less flammable native vegetation, and technologies that improve detection and assessment of new fire ignitions.
- 3) Strikes the July 1, 2025, sunset date on the Department of Conservation's (DOC) ability to authorize advance payments on a grant awarded under the RFFC program, authorizes the director of DOC to directly award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies developed pursuant to the RFFC program, and requires the director of DOC to establish guidelines consistent with the process described in item 1, above.
- 4) Authorizes CAL FIRE, as part of its Forest Health Grants program, to provide grants that improve ecosystem health, and requires moneys appropriated to CAL FIRE for landscape-scale projects to additionally be allocated for activities that improve ecosystem health on chaparral, shrubland, grassland, and coastal sage scrub lands, including replacement of ignition-prone nonnative flashy fuels with heavier and less flammable native vegetation and regional landscape grants that CAL FIRE may directly award to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies developed pursuant to the RFFC program.
- 5) Requires CAL FIRE to establish guidelines consistent with the process described in item 1, above.

COMMENTS

Pursuant to AB 9 (Wood), Chapter 225, Statutes of 2021, DOC launched the RFFC program to build the capacity of regional collaboratives through a common framework of regional forest and community resilience plans. Through RFFC, DOC provides block grants to regional entities to develop regional strategies that develop governance structures, identify wildfire risks, foster collaboration, and prioritize and implement projects within the region to achieve the goals of the

program. Block grants are used by recipients to support partner capacity, project readiness, implementation of demonstration projects, and regional priority planning to achieve landscape-level and community wildfire resilience consistent with the Action Plan as well as the California Forest Carbon Plan and Executive Order B-52-18.

Regional block grantees are expected to partner extensively across their region to identify priorities and develop projects. Current block grantees partner heavily with state, federal, tribal, and local governments as well as water agencies, resource conservation districts, fire safe councils, and other nonprofits.

AB 2513 amends three existing grant programs, including CAL FIRE's local assistance grant program for fire prevention and home hardening education activities, the RFFC Program, and CAL FIRE's Forest Health Grants, to explicitly authorize regional landscape grants to be awarded directly to regional entities with regional priority strategies developed pursuant to the RFFC Program, and creates a new grant program for that same purpose at WCB.

For the WCB and RFFC grants, the bill requires the administering state entities to coordinate with the Task Force to establish grant guidelines consistent with the goals of the Action Plan.

According to the Author

AB 2513 addresses two critical gaps in our efforts to achieve the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. First, the bill ensures that [RRFC] grantors can distribute funds for wildfire mitigation projects in the flammable shrubland ecosystems typical of Southern California, reflecting the full range of ecosystems at risk of catastrophic wildfire across the state. Second, AB 2513 increases the pace and scale of grant distribution by authorizing the DOC and the WCB to distribute regional landscape grants to local entities.

Arguments in Support

Save the Redwoods League writes that for decades, state wildfire policy and funding structures have focused primarily on forested ecosystems and competitive, project-by-project grants. By expanding the eligibility for forest health activities and incorporating clear statutory definitions, such as "ignition prevention," into the California Public Resources Code, this legislation helps ensure that critical risk-reduction activities across all California environments can be appropriately authorized, funded, and implemented. This clarification marks an important step toward a more regionally responsive and ecologically grounded approach to wildfire resilience.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill will result in:

- 1) Cost pressures of an unknown amount (General Fund, special fund, or bond funds) to WCB's grant programs to award regional landscape grants to implement regional priority strategies developed pursuant to RFFC. The magnitude of this cost pressure may vary based on the board's interpretation of the language.
- 2) Cost pressures of an unknown but potentially significant amount for CAL FIRE to fund the new, specified project types as well as continue to fund the project types currently eligible for

funding (General Fund, special fund such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), or bond funds).

- 3) DOC would incur costs to develop and administer the program, although the magnitude of these costs will depend, in part, on the amount of funding appropriated by the Legislature for this purpose.
- 4) Air Resources Board (ARB) estimates ongoing annual costs of approximately \$391,000 (GGRF) for just under two positions; ARB notes it is required, by statute, to develop quantification and reporting materials for agencies administering GGRF programs.
- 5) The State Water Resources Control Board estimates ongoing annual costs of approximately \$3.3 million (Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund) because of increased workload associated with large landscape-scale projects funded through the grants in this bill.

VOTES

ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0

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

ASM WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE: 13-0-0

YES: Papan, Jeff Gonzalez, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bennett, Boerner, Caloza, Gallagher, Hart, Muratsuchi, Rogers

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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