
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Josh Becker, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2513	Hearing Date:	June 23, 2026
Author:	Petrie-Norris		
Version:	April 16, 2026 Amended		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Edith Hannigan		

Subject: Wildfire: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program: local assistance grant program: regional landscape grants

SUMMARY

This bill would expand the kinds of activities eligible for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board and Regional Forest Fire Capacity Program to address ecosystem specific concerns in Southern California.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The WCB is a state grant-making agency, located within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), dedicated to safeguarding California's spectacular biological diversity and wild spaces for the benefit of present and future generations. WCB works in partnership with tribes, conservation organizations, and government agencies to acquire lands and design and implement habitat restoration and public access projects statewide. WCB was created by legislation in 1947. Today it administers nearly 20 programs that support projects in every corner of the state and in each one of California's terrestrial ecosystems. WCB is a key partner in advancing California's commitment to conserve 30 percent of its lands and coastal waters by 2030.

WCB's seven-member Board consists of the President of the Fish and Game Commission, the CDFW Director of the, the Director of the Department of Finance, and four public members, two appointed by the Legislature and two by the Governor. Non-voting members include three advisors each from the State Assembly and the State Senate.

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFC). Established in the Public Resources Code under the Department of Conservation (DOC), RFFC supports regional leadership to build local and regional capacity and develop, prioritize, and implement strategies and projects that create fire adapted communities and landscapes by improving ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and fire resilience. DOC provides block grants to regional entities and to eligible coordinating organizations to support the statewide implementation of the program.

Wildfire Prevention Grants. Administered by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Department), the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program funds projects in and near fire threatened communities to improve public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force). Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr, signed Executive Order No. B-52-18 on May 10, 2018, and established the Task Force to oversee its implementation. The Executive Order authorized state agencies to improve forest health and restoration, provide regulatory relief, reduce barriers to prescribed fire, boost education and outreach to landowners, and support wood products innovation.

The Task Force issued a “Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan” (Action Plan) in January 2021, and the Legislature required the Task Force to establish an implementation strategy by January 2022, which they did (Public Resources Code (PRC) §4771). The Task Force is required to update the Action Plan every five years (PRC §4771(f)). The Task Force most recently released a Draft Action Plan in June 2026.

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes the WCB in CDFW. Among other things, the WCB is required to investigate, study, and determine the areas in the state that are most suitable for certain wildlife-related purposes.
- 2) Authorizes the WCB to make grants or loans to nonprofit organizations, local governmental agencies, federal agencies, and state agencies for various purposes in connection with fish and wildlife habitat.
- 3) Authorizes the Department to establish a local assistance grant program for fire prevention and home hardening education activities (PRC §4124.5).
- 4) Establishes the RFFC in the DOC to support regional leadership to build local and regional capacity and develop, prioritize, and implement strategies and projects that create fire adapted communities and landscapes by improving ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and fire resilience.
- 5) Requires the Task Force to update the Action Plan every five years, and develop an implementation plan to achieve the Plan’s goals (PRC § 4771).

PROPOSED LAW

This bill would:

- 1) Authorize the WCB to award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement certain regional priority strategies
- 2) Require the WCB to establish guidelines for funding regional landscape grants to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Action Plan
- 3) Amend the definition of “fire prevention activities,” for the purposes of the Department’s Wildfire Prevention Grants Program, to include:
 - a) The creation of fuel breaks.
 - b) Ignition prevention.
 - c) Replacement of ignition-prone non-native fuels or flashy fuels with less flammable vegetation.
 - d) Technologies that improve detection and assessment of new fire ignitions.

- 4) Define the term “flashy fuel,” for the purposes of the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program, as “shrubs, grasses, and foliage, including, but not limited to, pine needles and leaves, that dry or cure rapidly, ignite easily, and spread fire quickly.
- 5) Define the term “ignition prevention,” for the purposes of the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program, as “those lawful activities that reduce the likelihood of wildfire ignitions caused directly or indirectly by human activity or infrastructure, including replacement or modification of ignition-prone nonnative fuels or flashy fuels with less flammable vegetation, hardening of infrastructure, including primary roadways, utility corridors, and public access points, to prevent fire ignition and spread, use of ignition-resistant materials, and community education or planning programs that reduce human-caused ignitions.”
- 6) Define the term “non-native fuel,” for the purposes of the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program as “nonnative or invasive plant species, including grasses, shrubs, and other annual plants, and nonnative or invasive woody plant species.”
- 7) Amend eligible activities under the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to include vegetation modification to reduce wildfire ignition risk and ignition prevention activities.
- 8) Establish a definition for the term “Director,” in the context of the RFFC at the DOC.
- 9) Specify the director may directly award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies.
- 10) Require the director to collaborate with the Task Force to establish guidelines for funding regional landscape grants to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Action Plan.
- 11) Authorizes the director to provide grants for projects and programs that improve ecosystem health.
- 12) Authorize moneys appropriated to the DOC for landscape-scale projects be allocated to activities that improve ecosystem health on chaparral, shrubland, grassland, and coastal sage scrub lands, including the replacement of ignition-prone nonnative fuels or flashy fuels with less flammable vegetation, and for regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies.
- 13) Establish definitions for the terms used in sections 11) and 12), above:
 - a) “Ecosystem” includes forest, chaparral, shrubland, grasslands, and coastal sage ecosystems and natural communities.
 - b) “Flashy fuels” means shrubs, grasses, and foliage, including, but not limited to, pine needles and leaves, that dry or cure rapidly, ignite easily, and spread fire quickly.
 - c) “Nonnative fuels” means nonnative or invasive plant species, including grasses, shrubs, and other annual plants, and nonnative or invasive woody plant species.
 - d) “Regional entities” has the same meaning as defined in Section 4208 of the PRC.

- 14) Require the director of DOC, prior to issuing regional landscape grants, to collaborate with the Task Force to establish guidelines for funding regional landscape grants to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Action Plan.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

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 Regional Forest and Fire Capacity 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 Department of Conservation and the Wildlife Conservation Board to distribute regional landscape grants to local entities.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

None received.

COMMENTS

Lack of Southern California nuance. According to information provided by the author’s office, some RFFC entities with shovel-ready projects have run into implementation delays because their projects don’t neatly fall under the state’s definition of approved wildfire mitigation activities. This has been felt most acutely in non-forested areas of the state where fire risk is comparable to forested areas but wildfire mitigation projects aren’t easily categorized as “fuels reduction” or “forest health.” This technicality delays funding and puts people’s lives and homes at risk, especially in flammable shrubland regions of the state where millions of Californians live.

Expanding access to funding for RFFC. This bill expands the definition of wildfire mitigation activities in state law to include chaparral ecosystems and expands the agencies that could distribute block grants under the RFFC program.

Writing in a “support if amended” position, the California Association of REALTORS suggests that the bill “[c]larify that references to eligible nonprofit organizations, regional entities, or coordinating organizations include nonprofit organizations that directly distribute financial assistance or provide program administration services to homeowners.”

Related Legislation

AB 388 (Connolly, 2023) would have required DOC to establish guidelines and regional investment strategies to support the goals and key actions identified in the Action Plan. This bill was held in Senate Appropriations.

AB 9 (Wood, Chapter 229, Statutes of 2021) created the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS: none

SUPPORT

Irvine Ranch Conservancy

California Association of REALTORS (if amended)
California Special Districts Association
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
East Bay Municipal Utility District
Endangered Habitats League
Escondido Creek Conservancy
Greater San Diego County Resource Conservation District
League of California Cities
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council
Orange County
Save the Redwoods League
Sea and Sage Audubon Society
Sempervirens Fund
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Tijuana Estuary Foundation
Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council

OPPOSITION

None received

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