
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2513
Author: Petrie-Norris (D)
Amended: 8/21/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/23/26

AYES: Becker, Seyarto, Allen, Cabaldon, Grove, Laird, Stern

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26 - See last page for vote

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

SOURCE: Irvine Ranch Conservancy

DIGEST: This bill expands the kinds of activities eligible for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and Regional Forest Fire Capacity Program to address ecosystem specific concerns in Southern California.

Senate floor amendments of 8/21/26 prevent code conflict if AB 1699 (Rogers) and this bill are both enacted.

ANALYSIS:

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes the WCB in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (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 (Public Resources Code (PRC) §4124.5).
- 4) Establishes the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFC) in the California Department of Conservation (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).

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes the WCB to award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement certain regional priority strategies
- 2) Amends 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.
- 3) Defines 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.
- 4) Defines 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.”

- 5) Defines 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.”
- 6) Amends eligible activities under the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to include vegetation modification to reduce wildfire ignition risk and ignition prevention activities.
- 7) Establishes a definition for the term “Director,” in the context of the RFFC at the DOC.
- 8) Specifies the director may directly award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies.
- 9) Requires 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.
- 10) Authorizes the director to provide grants for projects and programs that improve ecosystem health.
- 11) Authorizes 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.
- 12) Establishes 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.
- 13) Requires 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.
- 14) Includes chaptering out amendments to avoid code conflicts between this bill and AB 1699 (Rogers), in case both bills are enacted.

Background

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program. Established in the Public Resources Code under the 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.

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.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

- Cost pressure of an unknown but potentially significant amount (General Fund, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund [GGRF], or bond funds) for the Department of Conservation (DOC) to directly award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies developed pursuant to the RFFC program. (See staff comments for more information on cost pressures.)
- Cost pressure of an unknown amount (General Fund, GGRF, or bond funds) for the WCB to award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement regional priority strategies developed pursuant to the RFFC program.
- Cost pressure of an unknown but potentially significant amount (General Fund, GGRF, or bond funds) for the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) to fund the additional project types made eligible under its local assistance and forest health grant programs as a result of this bill, in addition to currently eligible project types.
- The California Air Resources Board (CARB) estimates ongoing costs of \$391,000 annually (GGRF) to review and update quantification methodologies, calculator tools, and reporting templates for fire prevention and forest health programs; update online resources and guidance documents to reflect expanded eligibility criteria; and update outreach and engagement materials and strategy; among other things.
- The State Water Board estimates ongoing costs of approximately \$2 million annually (Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund [TRFRF]) to coordinate with the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, WCB, DOC, and CalFire to develop guidelines for funding regional landscape grants; conduct increased inspections, oversight, and enforcement for these projects; and develop new individual or general Waste Discharge Requirements to permit these projects.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/21/26)

Irvine Ranch Conservancy (sponsor)
Association of California Cities - Orange County
California Association of Local Conservation Corps
California Association of REALTORS
California Municipal Utilities Association
California Special Districts Association
California State Association of Counties
City of Los Alamitos
City of Thousand Oaks

East Bay Municipal Utility District
 League of California Cities
 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
 Orange County Transportation Authority
 Orange; County of
 Save the Redwoods League
 Sea and Sage Audubon Society
 Sempervirens Fund

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/21/26)

None received

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.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 5/26/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Muratsuchi, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Edith Hannigan / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116
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