CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS
AB 2635 (Celeste Rodriguez)
As Amended August 13, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires, to the extent funding is appropriated, each large and medium air district, as defined, to offer commercial vouchers for zero-emission small off-road equipment (SORE). Prohibits districts from collecting or disclosing specified information from applicants. Limits penalties for violations of local ordinances, as specified.

Senate Amendments

1) Condition the requirement for air districts to implement a SORE voucher program on the appropriation of funds by the Legislature.

2) Require air districts to provide language assistance in the top five non-English languages spoken within the district's service area, rather than upon request.

3) Clarify that the bill's voucher requirement does not prohibit a district from implementing or maintaining a commercial voucher program using any other available funds.

4) Strike the five-year prohibition on a local government adopting or enforcing an ordinance prohibiting the use of SORE unless the local government offers SORE vouchers to landscapers.

5) Provide that a violation shall be deemed to occur no more than once per property or job site per calendar day.

COMMENTS

SORE emissions have been regulated since 1990, when exhaust and evaporative emission standards for SORE were first adopted by the Air Resources Board (ARB). Following passage of AB 1346 (Berman), Chapter 753, Statutes of 2021, ARB adopted zero emission standards for SORE. It is important to note that ARB’s emission standards apply only to manufacture of new equipment for sale or import into California. These regulations do not regulate the use of existing SORE equipment.

On a separate track, local governments in California have adopted ordinances to ban or restrict the use of lawn and garden equipment, primarily leaf blowers, dating back to the 1970s, based on local concerns about noise, but also air pollution, including exhaust and evaporative emissions associated with gas equipment, as well as fugitive dust created by all mechanical leaf blowers, gas and electric.

AB 1346 required ARB to identify funding for commercial rebates. In 2021, the Legislature appropriated $30 million in the Budget Act to provide incentives to small-business professional landscapers. Incentive funding was administered through the Clean Off-Road Equipment Voucher Incentive Project (CORE), with 1,906 products from 23 manufacturers in a dozen equipment categories available for point-of-sale vouchers. CORE-eligible landscaping equipment ranged from backpack leaf blowers to riding lawnmowers, as well as additional batteries and chargers. Requests for voucher applications began in September 2022 and available funding was exhausted by October 2023. In 2025, about $6.7 million in vouchers remained unredeemed. An additional round for voucher requests opened on March 26, 2025. Within 24 hours, all remaining funds had been requested. As of March 1, 2026, over 99.5 percent of all voucher funding has been distributed. This has reduced the up-font costs for professional landscapers in California for nearly 30,000 pieces of commercially available zero-emission landscape equipment, and almost 70,000 pieces when including additional batteries and chargers. Overall, 18 percent of voucher funding went to purchases by sole proprietorships. The strong interest from California's professional landscapers to use zero-emission equipment is reflected in voucher demand and the range of eligible SORE equipment.

According to the Author
California has set ambitious clean air goals, but we must also be clear about what compliance means for the workers whose livelihoods are at stake. Landscapers are essential to our communities, yet many are low-wage workers being asked to transition to costly new equipment without consistent or accessible support. In some areas, incentive programs are not available, and in others, requirements such as business licenses can exclude informal workers. At the same time, local bans are imposing fines that can escalate quickly, even when workers lack the resources to comply. AB 2635 is intended to make this transition more equitable.

Arguments in Support
According to sponsors Inclusive Action for the City, California Immigrant Policy Center, and National Day Laborer Organizing Network, many of the state's landscapers face significant challenges in obtaining electric equipment. Without an equitable transition, these policies risk placing disproportionate burdens on the very workers who are essential to our communities and to achieving the state's climate goals…AB 2635 ensures that California's transition to zero-emission landscaping equipment is equitable, economically inclusive, and continues to align with the state's environmental goals while maintaining realities that have been identified by workers in the industry.

Arguments in Opposition
According to the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, not all air districts have the resources to implement and maintain a commercial rebate program. This unfunded state mandate will require air districts already struggling with limited resources to divert them from other areas that are resulting in greater public health benefits than those that may be realized with this bill.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, this bill would create significant ongoing cost pressures (General Fund or special fund) on ARB, perhaps in the hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars annually…ARB could incur resource impacts from the bill due to potential grant agreements, grant oversight, fiscal tracking, and reporting.

To the extent the Commission on State Mandates determines that the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service on local agencies, local agencies could claim reimbursement of those costs, which could have a General Fund impact. Local air districts could incur unknown but potentially significant costs developing and implementing the program due to the bill's program requirements such as language assistance to applicants as well as implementing the business verification provisions while still meeting requirements for transparency of public funds and accountability. These local costs are potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates. The magnitude of these costs is unknown but could be in the hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars annually (General Fund).

VOTES:

ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 11-2-1
YES: Bryan, Alanis, Connolly, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur
NO: Ellis, Macedo
ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 12-2-1
YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache
NO: Dixon, Tangipa
ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 62-12-6
YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas
NO: Castillo, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Johnson, Macedo, Sanchez, Tangipa
ABS, ABST OR NV: Chen, Krell, Lackey, Patterson, Celeste Rodriguez, Ta

UPDATED

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