Date of Hearing: March 24, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
Isaac G. Bryan, Chair
AB 307 (Petrie-Norris) – As Introduced January 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: Department of Forestry and Fire Protection: fire camera mapping system.

SUMMARY: Requires $10 million of the $25 million made available by the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4) for the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to be allocated for purposes of the ALERTCalifornia fire camera mapping system.

EXISTING LAW, pursuant to Proposition 4, makes $25 million available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to CAL FIRE for technologies that improve detection and assessment of new fire ignitions. (Public Resources Code 91535)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

1) **Author's statement:**

> With the frequency and severity of wildfires in California increasing at an alarming rate over the last decade, remote sensing technology has never been more essential to the development of effective and time-critical wildfire prevention, protection, mitigation, and response plans. Since 2001, the ALERTCalifornia Wildfire Mapping System has proven to be an efficient and effective resource for our fire safety teams, providing enhanced wildfire detection and response in our state, and should be an integral part of our emergency fire response strategy.

2) **Proposition 4**. The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, approved by the voters as Proposition 4 at the November 5, 2024, statewide general election, authorized $10 billion in general obligation bonds to finance projects for safe drinking water, drought, flood, and water resilience, wildfire and forest resilience, coastal resilience, extreme heat mitigation, biodiversity and nature-based climate solutions, climate-smart, sustainable, and resilient farms, ranches, and working lands, park creation and outdoor access, and clean air programs.

   Of these funds, the bond act makes $1.5 billion available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for wildfire prevention, which includes $25 million available for CAL FIRE for technologies that improve detection and assessment of new fire ignitions.

3) **ALERTCalifornia**. On July 10, 2023, CAL FIRE announced it joined forces with the University of California San Diego's ALERTCalifornia Program to enhance wildfire response with artificial intelligence (AI) with the goal of improving firefighting capabilities and response times. The AI tool was rolled out to all units in the late summer of 2023 and

analyzes camera feeds across California for anomalies, alerting Emergency Command Centers and first responders to potential fires, sometimes even before 911 is notified.

As of July 2024, ALERTCalifornia uses 1,087 high-definition, pan-tilt zoom cameras strategically deployed throughout California. These cameras create a 24-hour surveillance network equipped with near-infrared night vision, enabling efficient monitoring of active wildfires and other disasters. ALERTCalifornia cameras can perform 360-degree sweeps approximately every two minutes, providing clear visuals of up to 60 miles on a clear day and 120 miles on a clear night.

CAL FIRE has invested a little more than $20 million in the ALERTCalifornia program over the past four years, and has committed an additional $3.5 million in the coming years.

The program also compiles data to enhance scientific understanding of fire-prone environments. Technologies like LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) are employed for data collection, providing detailed information on biomass and carbon estimation.

ALERTCalifornia sponsored LiDAR data acquisition from NV5, a leading provider of geospatial software and services, of the Palisades Fire and the Eaton Fire burn areas.

The provisional LiDAR data was collected by NV5 January 21- January 22, 2025, and can be used to analyze the fire's impact and provide insights for damage assessment, which is critical for recovery and rebuilding efforts, as well as for better understanding potential hazards due to debris from the fire.

4) **Other technologies coming down the line.** FireSat is a network of more than 50 low earth orbit satellites equipped with advanced multispectral infrared sensors and artificial intelligence to detect and monitor wildfires in real time. The technology will identify wildfires as small as 5x5 meters**,** significantly earlier than conventional methods, provide real-time data with a revisit time of fires between 15 to 20 minutes, and as few as 9 minutes in fire-prone regions, maintain 24/7 surveillance, and provide automated response integration to send alerts directly to CAL FIRE, local fire departments, and emergency management systems.

5) **This bill**. AB 307 would dedicate $10 million of the $25 million pot specifically for ALERTCalifornia. Appropriations are considered by the Assembly Budget Committee; the Budget Subcommittee no. 4 on Resources will be considering the allocations from Proposition 4 for the 2025-2026 budget. The author may wish to consider all of the available technologies and what each has to offer for wildfire detection and alert notification as appropriations from Proposition 4 are considered.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Forestry Association
Nv5

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Paige Brokaw / NAT. RES. /