

## CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 411 (Papan)

As Amended July 17, 2025

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Establishes the Caring About the Terrain, Livestock, and Ecosystems (CATTLE) Act, which permits livestock carcasses resulting from a routine livestock mortality event or on-farm processing to be composted under specified circumstances.

**Senate Amendments**

Define best management practices to include, but not be limited to, all of the following specifications:

- (A) Protection protocols for groundwater.
- (B) Protection of public health and food supply.
- (C) Proper management of compost piles.
- (D) Collaboration procedures with local enforcement agencies.
- (E) Enforcement and penalties for failing to follow the best management practices.

**COMMENTS**

This bill allows for on-farm composting of routine livestock mortalities and slaughter waste, which is an effective, environmentally friendly, and economically viable solution to current, unfeasible carcass and slaughter-waste disposal options. Composting has been scientifically demonstrated to drastically reduce conflicts between livestock and predators (compared to bone piles). This bill will thus benefit ranchers and wildlife alike, in addition to reducing environmental health hazards and nuisances and improving the economic viability of small family ranches and those that utilize small-scale slaughter operations.

Regulatory complexity and a lack of effective carcass disposal infrastructure has resulted in an extremely burdensome process for those seeking to dispose of livestock. Many ranchers are left with just two options: they can leave carcasses to decompose naturally, or move them to carcass disposal pits, also known as bone piles. Unfortunately, both of these options can lead to unwanted livestock-predator interactions, as bone piles can be a food source for predators and effectively draw predators to the area, where they may prey upon live animals, creating a vicious cycle. Additionally, leaving a carcass to decompose naturally can pose health or environmental hazards or public nuisance.

**According to the Author**

This bill offers ranchers a practical and environmentally friendly method of handling livestock carcasses by allowing them to compost the remains on-site. Currently, composting is not allowed. As such, many ranchers face significant challenges disposing of livestock remains. While they can transmit the remains to a rendering facility, often such facilities are out of reach, leaving ranchers with limited and less-than-ideal options. They can let carcasses decompose

naturally, move them to disposal pits or bone piles or bury them. Unfortunately, decomposition and bone piles attract predators, leading to dangerous interactions with live animals. Decomposition can also lead to serious health and environmental concerns. Bone burial is subject to complex regional regulations that make the method costly. On-site composting is a sustainable, cost-effective option that allows ranchers to manage their operations efficiently, safely, and responsibly. This bill offers a proactive approach to protecting both livestock and the environment.

### **Arguments in Support**

Composting of routine livestock mortalities is currently allowed in 42 other states, with at least one other state moving to authorize the practice this year. In California, the practice can already be employed under a waiver granted during declared emergencies for extreme heat, natural disasters, or other emergency conditions. For more than seven years, researchers at CSU Chico and the U.C. Cooperative Extension have conducted pilot research into the feasibility, efficacy, and safety of routine mortality composting in California under the supervision of CDFA, CalRecycle, and the Water Boards. The body of research from California and elsewhere has demonstrated that livestock mortality composting does not pose a health risk to humans or animals and is ecologically sound when implemented using standard BMPs.

### **Arguments in Opposition**

In an "Oppose Unless Amended" letter from the Pacific Coast Renderers Association and the California Grain and Feed Association states:

"While we empathize with farmers and ranchers who face challenges in managing livestock mortalities where rendering services are unavailable, we are concerned that AB 411 is overly broad in its application, bypassing existing law and creating the potential for unregulated composting operations statewide, even where they could harm public health and safety or where rendering services are available. As such, we suggest the bill should be narrowed to address legitimate concerns in rural Northern California counties or areas with limited access to rendering facilities. We look forward to working with you and the sponsors to responsibly address these concerns."

The opponents requests several amendments that would limit the scope to only farmers and ranchers, reduce the allowable amount of mammalian tissue, mandate composting facility requirements and best management practices, and limit applicability to mortalities occurring outside of existing rendering facility service areas.

### **FISCAL COMMENTS**

This bill CDFA estimates, at a minimum, General Fund costs of approximately \$225,000 for one-limited term senior environmental scientist in fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 to develop a one-time, static best management practices document for livestock composting.

CDFA notes, however, that there are outstanding questions about the scope of the bill's requirements. For example, it is unclear if the development of the best management practices is to be a one-time activity or something that would need to be maintained and evolve as new data and science become available. In addition, if the author's intent is for CDFA to ensure published best management practices are adhered to and to provide site review and on-site technical support, CDFA notes it would incur additional ongoing costs of approximately \$393,000 for two environmental scientists. Similarly, if the author intends the bill to fill research or outreach gaps

when sufficient information is unavailable to develop or modify best practices, CDFA would require contract funds in the amount of \$100,000.

CalRecycle and the State Water Board report minor and absorbable costs.

## **VOTES:**

### **ASM AGRICULTURE: 8-0-0**

**YES:** Soria, Alanis, Aguiar-Curry, Connolly, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Irwin, Ransom

### **ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 14-0-0**

**YES:** Bryan, Alanis, Connolly, Ellis, Flora, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Muratsuchi, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur

### **ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1**

**YES:** Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Sanchez

### **ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0-0**

**YES:** 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, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

## **UPDATED**

VERSION: July 17, 2025

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