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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### AB 947 (Connolly) - Agriculture: Cannella Environmental Farming Act of 1995

**Version:** February 20, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** July 14, 2025

**Policy Vote:** AGRI. 4 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Robert Ingenito

**Bill Summary:** AB 947 would, among other things, make specified changes to the technical assistance (TA) provisions of the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) climate smart agriculture programs.

**Fiscal Impact:** By increasing the TA program's scope and eligible activities that may be funded, this bill would create cost pressures on the department and its climate smart agriculture programs. The magnitude is unknown, and at a minimum would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. (General Fund/special funds/bond fund). CDFA currently absorbs the associated workload, and has never received permanent baseline funding for its Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability; instead, all the activities related to the TA program have been funded by on a one-time basis.

**Background:** CDFA indicates that TA is a key component of its climate smart agriculture programs, including the Healthy Soils Program (HSP), the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET), and the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP). A 5 percent set-aside within these programs funds the TA program to help farmers and ranchers with project development, applications, implementation, and reporting. Since 2019, CDFA has awarded \$96 million to AMMP projects, \$163 million for HSP, and \$88 million for SWEET. CDFA has funded approximately 75 grants to TA providers to help farmers and ranchers access HSP, SWEET, and AMMP.

Proposition 4 (the \$10 billion voter-approved climate bond approved in 2024) includes \$300 million for a variety of activities related to supporting climate smart agriculture, including HSP and SWEET. The multiyear expenditure plan for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund includes funding for AMMP.

According to the California Climate and Agriculture Network, this bill makes a number of changes to CDFA's TA program that have been proposed by stakeholders based on their experience with the program over the past seven years. These updates include expanding the definition of TA and list of eligible TA activities to include activities farmers, ranchers, and TA providers have identified as important TA needs (for example, planning, matching funds coordination, translation, access to equipment, and environmental compliance); clarifying that TA grants may be used to provide assistance to farmers and ranchers over multiple grant application cycles; and allowing CDFA to support training and capacity building within TA provider organizations to "improve the quality, consistency, and reach of technical assistance to farmers and ranchers across the state and to help farmers and ranchers access all relevant state and federal programs."

**Proposed Law:** This bill would, among other things, do the following:

- Rename and expand the scope of the “environmental farming” program at CDFA as the “sustainable agriculture” program and requires the program to provide research, TA, and incentive grants to promote agricultural practices that support climate resilience on farms and ranches.
- Update the membership and responsibilities of CDFA’s Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (EFASAP), as specified.
- Expand the definition of TA as it relates to CDFA’s climate smart agriculture TA grant program to include conservation agricultural planning, grant writing, translation and interpretation, environmental compliance facilitation, and various other purposes.
- Allow TA funding to be used to provide assistance over multiple funding cycles.
- Require CDFA to provide funds to technical assistance providers to: (1) support farmers and ranchers in the application process for grants from those programs and the implementation of funded projects; (2) provide general planning and training for climate-smart and sustainable agriculture; and (3) lease, purchase, or repair farming, ranching, and food processing equipment that can be centrally housed with the TA provider and shared regionally with producers.
- Allow a percentage of funding, to be determined by CDFA, to support training and capacity building within TA provider organizations and coordination between organizations to improve assistance, as specified.
- Allow equipment-sharing costs funded as part of grant awards to include developing and expanding equipment sharing programs, as specified.
- .Modify the allowable grant amounts for TA providers, as specified.

**Related Legislation:**

- AB 389 (Chapter 928, Statutes of 1995) established the Cannella Environmental Farming Act of 1995.
- AB 1348 (Chapter 620, Statutes of 2017) required CDFA to include socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, regulations, and policies and programs.
- AB 2377 (Chapter 868, Statutes of 2018) established a technical assistance grant program to provide funds to technical assistance providers who work with applicants for the Healthy Soils Program (HSP), alternative manure management programs (AMMP), and the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP).

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