
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Josh Becker, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: SB 895 **Hearing Date:** April 14, 2026
Author: Wiener
Version: April 6, 2026 Amended
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Genevieve Wong

Subject: California Science and Health Research Bond Act

SUMMARY

This bill would enact the California Science and Health Research Bond Act, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$23 million pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law, to finance grants and loans to fund research and construct, operate, and maintain facilities for research. The bill would establish the California Foundation for Science and Health Research to award such grants and loans to public or private research companies, universities, institutes, and organizations in the fields of biomedical, disease prevention, wildfire prevention, climate, weather, ocean, and coastal and marine ecosystems, amongst others.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

Ongoing threats to federal funding. According to information provided by the author, since early 2025, the federal government has frozen, cut, and cancelled funding for scientific research across the country. California has been especially impacted by these funding cuts as federal investment fuels research and development in California.

Institutions within the state receive funding from agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the US Department of Energy (DOE). In federal fiscal year 2024, California institutions received \$5.2 billion from the NIH and over \$1 billion from the NSF to support research at the state's universities, hospitals, and companies. A large share of this funding went towards the University of California (UC) system, which receives more NIH and NSF grants than any other institution in the nation. Across all federal agencies, the UCs were awarded \$5 billion for nearly 17,000 projects in 2024, which accounts for more than half of all UC research awards.

The Trump Administration, in its 2027 budget request to Congress released on April 3, 2026, asked for deep cuts to federal research spending, including the following:

- 55% cut to NSF, from \$8.8 billion to \$4 billion.
- 23% cut to NASA, from \$24.4 billion to \$18.8 billion. This includes a 47% drop in funding for its science division.
- 15% cut to the DOE's Office of Science, from \$8.4 billion to \$7.1 billion.
- 12% cut to the NIH, from \$47.2 billion to \$41.3 billion.
- 27% cut to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, from \$6.2 billion to \$4.5 billion. This includes eliminating the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.

- 52% cut to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), from \$8.8 billion to \$4.2 billion. This includes a 32% cut to the EPA's Science and Technological account.¹

In 2026, the Trump administration had requested similar cuts, which were largely rejected by lawmakers. This makes the budget proposal unlikely to be supported by Congress, but it is indicative of the administration's priorities.

Although the 2026 proposed budget cuts were ultimately rejected by Congress, science research continues to experience a challenging federal environment. According to a January 2026 article in *Nature*, 5,844 NIH grants and 1,996 NSF grants were cancelled or suspended for not aligning with the Trump Administration's priorities, affecting research on topics like vaccine uptake, infectious diseases, and people from underrepresented groups.

Unstable funding can have significant impacts on the hundreds of research projects that are taking place within California, such as halting projects, disrupting experiments, and financial strain on the researchers.

Existing law establishes the Government Operations Agency, which includes the Department of Technology, the Department of General Services, and the Office of Data and Innovation, among other departments, offices, and boards. (Government Code (GOV) §12803.2)

PROPOSED LAW

This bill would enact the California Science and Health Research Bond Act (Bond Act), which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$23 million pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law, to finance grants and loans to fund research and construct, operate, and maintain facilities for research. Specifically, the Bond Act would:

- 1) Establish the California Foundation for Science and Health Research (Foundation) within the Government Operations Agency, and specifies that the Foundation's role is to facilitate scientific research by awarding grants and making loans to public or private research companies, universities, institutes, and organizations for scientific research and development and to construct facilities for research and development, including, but not limited to, in the following fields:
 - a) Biomedical.
 - b) New and emerging health threats.
 - c) Disease prevention.
 - d) Promoting health and safe behaviors, communities, and environment.
 - e) Wildfire prevention.
 - f) Behavioral health.
 - g) Climate.
 - h) Weather.

¹ <https://www.science.org/content/article/slasher-sequel-trump-again-proposes-major-cuts-u-s-science-spending>, last accessed April 6, 2026; <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-01105-7>, last accessed April 6, 2026.

- i) Ocean.
 - j) Coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.
 - k) Agriculture and water.
 - l) Emerging technologies.
 - m) Safety, efficacy, and security of drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply, and cosmetics.
- 2) Require the Secretary of Government Operations to oversee the process of appointing the director of the Foundation and to set the level of salaries, bonuses, and benefits for the director.
 - 3) Establish the California Foundation for Science and Health Research Fund (Fund) and require moneys to be deposited in the Fund upon appropriation.
 - 4) Require moneys in the Fund be used by the Foundation to award public and private grants to, and make loans to, public or private research companies, universities, institutes, and organizations for scientific research and development, including, but not limited to, the fields described above.
 - 5) Require all research and development funded by the Fund to be conducted under established standards of open scientific exchange, peer review, and public oversight.
 - a) Require all grants or loans provided under the bill be awarded or made available to researchers or projects located within the state, except that funding for research collaboratives between California and out-of-state researchers is permitted.
 - b) Require all grants or loans to be awarded based on:
 - i) Consistency with research priorities established by the Council.
 - ii) Scientific merit of the proposed research.
 - c) Require the Foundation to prioritize funding research that replaces funding cuts by the federal government.
 - d) Prohibit more than three percent of the moneys in the Fund be used for administrative costs.
 - e) Require the Foundation to recommend to the Council Foundation for Science and Health Research Council (Council), which would be established by the bill (see below), standards to ensure that if the grantee or loan recipient purchases goods or services using funds authorized for, or made available to, the Foundation, the goods or services purchased are from California suppliers to the extent reasonably possible, in a good faith effort to achieve a goal of more than 50 percent of purchases from California suppliers.
 - 6) Establish the Council to develop the strategic objectives of the Foundation; actively participate in the overall management of the Foundation; and determine which research projects will be funded by the Fund based on research priorities and the

technical merits of the proposals.

- a) Make the director and personnel of the Foundation responsible for implementing strategic objectives of the Council, administering grants and loans awarded by the Council, and all other duties as deemed necessary for the operation of the Foundation.
- b) Require the Council to consist of 11 to 13 members as follows:
 - i) Seven of the members appointed by the Secretary of Government Operations as follows:
 - (1) Five members are scientists or hold backgrounds in science or research, including at least one member who is a graduate-level researcher and at least one member who is a postdoctoral scholar, with current or past research experience in the above-described fields.
 - (2) One member with a background in economics.
 - (3) One member is a patient advocate.
 - ii) One member is a health care provider, appointed by the Senate Rules Committee.
 - iii) One member is an advocate in climate or environmental fields, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.
 - iv) One member is the chief executive officer of the California Council on Science and Technology, or their designee.
 - v) One member is a designee of the President of the University of California, if the president chooses to designate a representative, who shall be a scientist or hold a background in science or research.
 - vi) One member is a designee of the Chancellor of the California State University, if the chancellor chooses to designate a representative, who shall be a scientist or hold a background in science or research,
 - vii) One member is the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, or his or her designee, who shall be a scientist or hold a background in science or research.
- c) Authorize individuals and organizations to submit nominations for membership to the Secretary of the Governmental Operations Agency and authorize the Secretary of the Governmental Operations Agency to solicit nominations from relevant organizations and individuals. Appointees are not subject to confirmation by the Senate.

- d) Require members of the Council to serve four-year terms, and a maximum of two terms.
 - i) Prohibit a grant or loan from being approved if there are more than six vacancies on the Council.
- e) Provide that a majority of the membership of the council constitutes a quorum for the transaction of any business, for the performance of any duty, or for the exercise of any power of the board. If a vacancy or recusal in the Council occurs, a majority of the remaining members constitutes a quorum.
- f) Authorize any member to participate in a decision to approve or award a grant or loan to a person or entity for the purpose of research involving either a disease from which the member or their immediate family member suffers or a disease in which the member has an interest as a representative of a disease advocacy organization, unless prohibited by any other law.
- g) Authorize the Council to approve or award a grant or loan in which a member of the Council is financially interested as long as the interested member recuses themselves from making, participating in making, or attempting to use their official position to include a decision on the grant or loan.
- h) Authorize the Council to establish one or more scientific peer review panels consisting of experts in the above-described fields for the purposes of reviewing and prioritizing proposals on the basis of scientific merit of the proposal, the potential benefits to the health and well-being of the population, natural resources, and environment of the state, and the demonstrated background, training, and expertise of the researchers and investigators to conduct the proposed work.
 - i) Prohibit an expert on a scientific review panel from having a collaborative or commercial relationship with any applicant of a proposal for funding that the expert is reviewing and prioritizing.
- 7) Require the Foundation to issue an annual report, to be published on its website, that sets forth the foundation's activities, grants awarded, loans made available, grants and loans in process, research accomplishments, and future program directions.
- 8) Require the Foundation to annually commission an independent financial audit of its activities from a certified accounting firm, which shall be provided to the Controller, who shall review the audit and annually issue a public review of the report.
 - a) Require the Controller to hold a public meeting with notice and a formal public comment period.
- 9) Require the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act to apply to all meetings of the Council and scientific peer review panels, except as provided, and authorize the Council and scientific peer review panels to conduct closed sessions when they need to consider specified matters including information relating to patients or medical or scientific

research subjects; confidential intellectual property or work product; scientific data, analyses, or other research products not yet formally published; amongst others.

- 10) Require proceeds of the bonds issued and sold pursuant to the Bond Act be deposited into the Fund and all moneys in the fund be continuously appropriated for purposes of the Bond Act.
- 11) Require an unspecified amount be made available for grants and loans to fund the construction and acquisition of facilities for research.
- 12) Require an unspecified amount be made available for specific purposes including grants and loans to fund research and operate and maintain facilities for research; administrative costs, as specified; costs of issuing interim debt, as specified; and costs of issuing bonds, as specified.
- 13) Require repayment of principal and interest on any loans made by the Foundation be deposited in the Fund and used to make additional grants and loans or for paying administrative costs of outstanding bonds.
- 14) Create the California Foundation for Science and Health Research Finance Committee (Committee) for the purpose of authorizing the issuance and sale of bonds and interim debt authorized by the Bond Act.
 - a) Require the Committee, by resolution, to determine whether it is necessary or desirable to issue and sell bonds authorized, as specified.
 - b) Require an interest-only floating rate bond structure to be implemented for interim debt and bonds.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

According to the author, "SB 895 will place on the November 2026 ballot a \$23 billion bond to fund health and science research. The bill will additionally establish the California Foundation for Science and Health Research. Over the past year we have seen an incredible politicization of what was once considered bipartisan and vital research. With the federal government cutting billions of dollars to scientific research, California is placed in a dire situation. As the state that receives the most federal research dollars and a global leader in research and technology, the cuts risk California's health and economic wellbeing."

"Scientific research and innovation have driven California's economic success for decades. The breakthroughs produced by universities and scientific researchers have sparked new industries and powered the success of the state's biotech, medical, agricultural, and software industries from startups to global companies. For every dollar invested in National Institutes of Health research there is a return of approximately \$2.50 in economic activity"

"Without this investment from the state, Californians and the world will lose out on critical, life-saving discoveries that will treat diseases, uplift public health, and address

climate change. For a healthy, prosperous future for all Californians, SB 895 is a critical step.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

None received

COMMENTS

This bill is double referred. This bill is double referred with the Senate Health Committee, with this committee being the committee of second referral. Elements of this bill under the jurisdiction of the Senate Health Committee are included here for context and completeness only. This bill passed out of the Senate Health Committee on March 25, 2026, with a vote of 9 - 2.

You look familiar. Last year, the author had a substantially similar bill, SB 829, which would have established the California Institute for Scientific Research within the Government Operations Agency. The bill was held on the Senate Appropriations suspense file. The main differences between this bill and SN 829 are:

- Slight differences in names. This bill proposes to establish the California Foundation for Science and Health Research, California Foundation for Science and Health Research Fund, and the California Foundation for Science and Health Research Council. SB 829, however, would have created the California Institute for Scientific Research, the California Institute for Scientific Research Fund, and the California Institute for Scientific Research Council.
- Bond provisions. This bill contains provisions related to the issuance of bonds, SB 829 did not.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS: none

SUPPORT

Union of American Physicians and Dentists (co-sponsor)
 United Auto Workers Region 6 (co-sponsor)
 United Auto Workers Region 4811 (co-sponsor)
 University of California Office of the President (co-sponsor)
 350 Bay Area Action
 Access Reproductive Justice
 ALS Association
 ALS Network
 American Academy of Neurology
 American College of Physicians - California Chapter
 American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, ALF-CIO
 Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities (AICCU)
 Berkeley Faculty Association
 Blood Cancer United, Formerly the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
 California Academy of Sciences
 California Association of Professional Scientists UAW Local 115
 California Chronic Care Coalition
 California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
 California Environmental Voters
 California Faculty Association
 California Institute of Technology

California Nurses Association
California Physicians Alliance
California Psychological Association
California State University, Office of the Chancellor
Chamber San Mateo County
City of Eureka
Clean Earth 4 Kids
Council of University of California Faculty Associations
Courage California
Culver City Democratic Club
Equality California
Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group
Humane World for Animals
Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Coalition
Indivisible Ca: StateStrong
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers
of America
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center and its Affiliated Entities
Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
Natera, INC.
Northeastern University
Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce
Parkinson Association of Northern California
Parkinson Network of Mt. Diablo
Parkinson's Association of San Diego
Parkinson's Community Los Angeles
Point Blue Conservation Science
Public Health Institute (PHI)
San Diego Faculty Association
San Diego Natural History Museum
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
San Mateo County Economic Development Association
Santa Monica Democratic Club
Stanford University
Teamsters California
The Children's Partnership
The Climate Center
U.S. Pain Foundation
UAW Local 230
UAW Local 2478
UAW Local 4123
UAW Local 509
UAW Local 872
University of California
University of California Graduate and Professional Council
University of California Irvine Faculty Association
University of California Los Angeles Faculty Association
University of California Los Angeles Graduate Students Association
University of California Riverside Faculty Association

University of California San Francisco Faculty Association
University of California Student Association
Western Center on Law & Poverty, INC.

OPPOSITION

None Received

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