

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 211

Introduced by Assembly Member Bigelow
(Principal coauthor: Senator Berryhill)
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Obernolte and Patterson)

January 23, 2017

An act to amend Section 4214 of the Public Resources Code, relating to fire prevention.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 211, as introduced, Bigelow. State responsibility area fire prevention fees: reporting requirement.

Existing law requires the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to establish a fire prevention fee in an amount not to exceed \$150 to be charged on each habitable structure on a parcel that is within a state responsibility area. Existing law requires the fee moneys to be expended, upon appropriation, in specified ways, including to reimburse the State Board of Equalization's expenses incurred in the collection of the fee and to the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for administrative purposes, with excess moneys being expended only for specified fire prevention activities, as provided. Existing law, until January 31, 2017, requires the board to submit an annual written report to the Legislature on the status of the uses of the fee moneys.

This bill would require the report to include an itemized accounting of all expenditures from the fund and would require the reporting to occur annually for an indefinite period of time.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 4214 of the Public Resources Code is
2 amended to read:

3 4214. (a) Fire prevention fees collected pursuant to this chapter
4 shall be expended, upon appropriation by the Legislature, as
5 follows:

6 (1) The State Board of Equalization shall retain moneys
7 necessary for the payment of refunds pursuant to Section 4228 and
8 reimbursement of the State Board of Equalization for expenses
9 incurred in the collection of the fee.

10 (2) The moneys collected, other than those retained by the State
11 Board of Equalization pursuant to paragraph (1), shall be deposited
12 into the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fund, which is
13 hereby created in the State Treasury, and shall be available to the
14 board and the department to expend for fire prevention activities
15 specified in subdivision (d) that benefit the owners of habitable
16 structures within a state responsibility area who are required to
17 pay the fire prevention fee. The amount expended to benefit the
18 owners of habitable structures within a state responsibility area
19 shall be commensurate with the amount collected from the owners
20 within that state responsibility area. All moneys in excess of the
21 costs of administration of the board and the department shall be
22 expended only for fire prevention activities in counties with state
23 responsibility areas.

24 (b) (1) The fund may also be used to cover the costs of
25 administering this chapter.

26 (2) The fund shall cover all startup costs incurred over a period
27 not to exceed two years.

28 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that the moneys in this fund
29 be fully appropriated to the board and the department each year
30 in order to effectuate the purposes of this chapter.

31 (d) Moneys in the fund shall be used only for the following fire
32 prevention activities, which shall benefit owners of habitable
33 structures within the state responsibility areas who are required to
34 pay the annual fire prevention fee pursuant to this chapter:

35 (1) Local assistance grants pursuant to subdivision (e).

36 (2) Grants to Fire Safe Councils, the California Conservation
37 Corps, or certified local conservation corps for fire prevention
38 projects and activities in the state responsibility areas.

1 (3) Grants to a qualified nonprofit organization with a
2 demonstrated ability to satisfactorily plan, implement, and complete
3 a fire prevention project applicable to the state responsibility areas.
4 The department may establish other qualifying criteria.

5 (4) Inspections by the department for compliance with defensible
6 space requirements around habitable structures in state
7 responsibility areas as required by Section 4291.

8 (5) Public education to reduce fire risk in the state responsibility
9 areas.

10 (6) Fire severity and fire hazard mapping by the department in
11 the state responsibility areas.

12 (7) Other fire prevention projects in the state responsibility
13 areas, authorized by the board.

14 (e) (1) The board shall establish a local assistance grant program
15 for fire prevention activities designed to benefit habitable structures
16 within state responsibility areas, including public education, that
17 are provided by counties and other local agencies, including special
18 districts, with state responsibility areas within their jurisdictions.

19 (2) In order to ensure an equitable distribution of funds, the
20 amount of each grant shall be based on the number of habitable
21 structures in state responsibility areas for which the applicant is
22 legally responsible and the amount of moneys made available in
23 the annual Budget Act for this local assistance grant program.

24 (f) By January 31, 2015, ~~and~~ *and, notwithstanding Section*
25 *10231.5 of the Government Code*, annually thereafter, the board
26 shall submit to the Legislature a written report on the status and
27 uses of the fund pursuant to this ~~chapter~~ *chapter, including an*
28 *itemized accounting of all expenditures from the fund*. The written
29 report shall also include an evaluation of the benefits received by
30 counties based on the number of habitable structures in state
31 responsibility areas within their jurisdictions, the effectiveness of
32 the board's grant programs, the number of defensible space
33 inspections in the reporting period, the degree of compliance with
34 defensible space requirements, measures to increase compliance,
35 if any, and any recommendations to the Legislature.

36 ~~(g) (1) The requirement for submitting a report imposed under~~
37 ~~subdivision (f) is inoperative on January 31, 2017, pursuant to~~
38 ~~Section 10231.5 of the Government Code.~~

39 (2)

1 (g) A report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (f) shall be
2 submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government
3 Code.

4 (h) It is essential that this article be implemented without delay.
5 To permit timely implementation, the department may contract
6 for services related to the establishment of the fire prevention fee
7 collection process. For this purpose only, and for a period not to
8 exceed 24 months, ~~the provisions of the Public Contract Code or~~
9 ~~any other provision of law related to public contracting shall not~~
10 apply.

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