



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-0155, **Version:** 1

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Supervisor Parlin recommending the Board authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for the Governor's proposed Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan.

**FUNDING:** N/A

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

On January 21, 2021 Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) asked member counties for letters of support for the Governor's proposed Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan (Expenditure Plan).

RCRC is supporting the Governor's Expenditure Plan to help prevent future catastrophic wildfire events like we've seen in recent years. If passed by the Legislature, the proposal would allocate a total of \$1 billion to forest health and wildfire prevention programs between the current and 2021-22 budget years.

The Expenditure Plan will fund implementation programs and projects that will immediately benefit residents in RCRC member counties such as home hardening retrofits for low-income residents, as well as providing grants to communities for fuels treatment projects and community fire hardening efforts such as fuel breaks.

The Expenditure Plan will also jumpstart a move toward establishing an innovative wood products industry in California, which is vital to the maintenance of wildland fuels treatment. Finally, the Expenditure Plan will allow the state's forest health agencies to continue working with federal land managers to minimize the threat of wildfire on national forest lands and other federally managed lands.

While there is support among stakeholders for the Governor's proposal, it is imperative that California's rural counties express their support to the Legislature for this robust effort to fund forest resilience and wildfire prevention measures in California. RCRC recently submitted its own letter to both Senate and Assembly Budget Subcommittees supporting the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan. RCRC staff encourages RCRC member counties to submit their own letters of support to communicate the importance of the Governor's spending proposal for the future of wildfire prevention in California's rural communities.

Excerpt from RCRC's Rural Rundown of the Governor's 2021-22 Proposed Budget

### **Resources**

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan. Wildfire has become the most urgent natural disaster facing California, with California experiencing its most devastating and destructive wildfire season in modern history in 2020. The Governor's 2021-22 proposed Budget builds upon the Administration's recent expenditures with a substantial commitment to forest health and wildfire prevention activities.

The Governor's 2021-22 proposed Budget contains a \$1 billion Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan, which will fund various portions of the newly released Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (Plan) developed by the Governor's Forest Management Task Force. The Plan divides the expenditure into a \$323 million current year allocation, to be carried out on projects before the start of the 2021 wildfire season, with the remaining allocation in the 2021-22 budget year.

Plan components include:

**Resilient Forests and Landscapes:** The Plan includes \$512 million to enhance wildfire resilience through forest thinning, reforestation and prescribed fire. Programs will include grants for forest health projects, as well as support for post-fire watershed recovery, support for small landowners and a direct investment to Tribes.

**Wildfire Fuel Breaks:** CAL FIRE and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) will receive \$335 million to complete 45 to 60 strategic fuel break projects each year over the next several years, building on the Governor's 35 fuel treatment projects in 2019.

**Community Hardening:** Recognizing the need to provide assistance for homeowners in high fire risk communities, the Plan will include \$38 million for retrofits of homes for low income homeowners, as well as educational outreach on home hardening and defensible space in fire prone communities.

**Forest Sector Economic Stimulus:** The Plan provides \$76 million for investments in wood products markets to help create incentives for private forestland management, including the establishment of a low-interest lending program through the Climate Catalyst Fund, as well as investments in forest sector workforce development.

**Science-Based Management:** The Plan will augment the state's wildfire research and monitoring capabilities through a \$39 million allocation to support long-term forest health and restoration goals.

**Five-Year Extension of Senate Bill 901 Funding:** The Governor's proposed 2021-22 Budget also includes statutory changes to extend the annual \$200 million Cap-and-Trade funding allocation created by SB 901 (Dodd; 2018) for an additional five years.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

N/A

#### **PRIOR BOARD ACTION**

N/A

#### **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

N/A

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

N/A

## **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Obtain Chair's signature and originals to be signed

## **STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Infrastructure

Provide, operate and maintain our infrastructure, public facilities, and associated services that protect our community, environment and economic well-being

## **CONTACT**

Supervisor Parlin