

# California State Assembly



## Informational Hearing Agenda

### Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy, and Transportation

Assemblymember Steve Bennett, Chair

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

9:30 A.M. – State Capitol, Room 447

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**Non-Presentation Items:** The following items do not receive a formal presentation from the Administration in order to focus time on the most substantial proposals. Members of the Subcommittee may ask questions or make comments on these proposals at the time designated by the Subcommittee Chair or request a presentation by the Administration at the discretion of the Subcommittee Chair. Members of the public are encouraged to provide public comment on these items at the designated time.

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**Public Comment will be taken in person after the completion of all panels and any discussion from the Members of the Subcommittee.**

## Presentation Items

### 3600 Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

#### Issue 1: Golden Mussel Containment

The Governor's budget requests 8 permanent positions to increase the department's capacity to prevent the spread of golden mussel from infested waters. The requested resources will support prevention efforts by federal, state, and local agencies to prevent the introduction of golden mussel to un-infested waters throughout California.

These positions will be funded for three years from \$20 million previously appropriated from the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Fund (Prop. 4) in the 2025 Budget.

#### Background:

In October 2024, Golden mussels (*Limnoperna fortunei*) were discovered in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This is the first known occurrence of this non-native invasive species in North America, and the first invasive mussel detected in the Central Valley.

Golden mussel is a fingernail-size bivalve native to Asia that uses protein-based fibers to attach to underwater surfaces. Golden mussels are highly efficient filter feeders, reproduce at high rates, and form dense colonies. Mass colonization on surfaces - termed biofouling - impedes water flow, clogs pipes, and fouls watercraft motors, which necessitates ongoing, costly removal to maintain operational function. These costs result in economic impacts to water conveyances, energy production, recreation, agriculture, and ultimately the public.

Additionally, golden mussels consume large quantities of aquatic microscopic plants and animals that native species and sport fish depend on for food. Mass colonies of golden mussel alter ecological processes of the natural environment resulting in detrimental impacts to native and game species and water quality.

There are no socially and environmentally benign methods currently available to eliminate invasive golden mussels once they are present. Therefore, containing mussels within infested areas is the only means to minimize additional new, widespread impacts. While the spread of invasive mussels in interconnected waters cannot be prevented without restricting navigation, their overland spread, attached to and within watercraft and equipment (collectively termed conveyances), can be prevented.

Conveyances carrying live invasive mussels that are launched into un-infested waterbodies can result in a new mussel infestation. Given the central location of the Delta, its large geographic area, accessibility, high recreational use, and many conveyances and equipment that sit in-water for extended periods of time, without action, golden mussels will spread to the many non-hydrologically connected reservoirs and waterways throughout the Central Valley, Sierra foothills

and mountains, the Coastal Range, and Northern California, affecting fresh and brackish-water ecosystems and innumerable domestic and agricultural water supply systems, hydropower facilities, flood control structures, recreation areas, and consequentially, the state's economy and wellbeing of its residents.

### **How Responsibilities are Broken Down by State, Local, and Federal Agencies:**

CDFW is the lead agency responsible for developing the Golden mussel Response Framework, approving prevention and control plans, creating and enforcing regulations, educating the public and water managers on ways to prevent spread of invasive species through outreach and education, and providing technical assistance to water managers.

Water managers (Federal, State, and Local) are responsible for managing the impacts of mussels on their operations, containing mussels from spreading overland by conveyances such as watercraft and equipment, and minimizing potential downstream transport of invasive mussels in water released from their systems. Water managers are also responsible for creating control and prevention programs for review and approval by CDFW.

California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways is responsible for the invasive mussel prevention grant program, funded by the invasive mussel sticker fees, which grants funding to water managers implementing invasive mussel prevention programs.

Department of Motor Vehicles is responsible for selling invasive mussel stickers and collecting fees.

As part of the Golden Mussel Response Framework a Golden Mussel Task Force was formed that includes representatives from State, Federal and local agencies, as well as water managers. The Task Force, led by CDFW, includes various sub teams detailed in the Response Framework. This includes a "Partners" sub-team that meets at least monthly and is available to all cities, counties, reservoir managers and their recreation operators, and water districts. This team is coordinated by CDFW for participants to coordinate and share information on new technologies, research, and lessons learned for managing infrastructure in positive waters, information on grants or other funding availability, monitoring results, new detections, coordinated response on prevention, etc.

### **Details on Budget Request:**

This request is for permanent positions associated with funding included in the 2025 Budget from Proposition 4 to add invasive mussel containment capacity, primarily to Central and Northern California, to ensure conveyances leaving the Delta do not move golden mussel to uninfested waters.

This request will be spread across three fiscal years, using \$4.1 million Prop. 4 in FY 2025-26, \$3.9 million Prop. 4 in FY 2026-27, and \$3.9 million Prop. 4 in FY 2027-28. This will fund the 8 positions. The remaining funds from Prop. 4 will be used for contracting to support the Outreach and Education Campaign, laboratory and field equipment and supplies, acquisition of eight K9s,

law enforcement overtime, and specialized operating expenses and equipment for law enforcement. The positions include 1.0 permanent Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor, 3.0 permanent Environmental Scientists, 1.0 permanent Research Scientist I, 1.0 permanent Research Scientist II, 1.0 permanent Marketing Specialist, 1.0 permanent Associate Governmental Program Analyst, 1.0 existing Environmental Scientist, and temporary staff.

The positions will work with federal, state, and local water managers to:

- Develop and implement site-specific watercraft inspection and prevention programs
- Promote coordinated prevention programs between water managers that improve access for recreational boaters and expedite launching
- Train water agency staff and private entities to inspect and decontaminate watercraft and equipment
- Verify ongoing effectiveness of their service providers
- Provide training to water managers on conducting early-detection monitoring for invasive mussels at un-infested waters to substantiate they are un-infested
- Analyze plankton samples collected by water managers
- Fill monitoring gaps in waters not managed by a specific entity, and
- Promote public engagement and action to prevent the spread of invasive mussels.

**Panel**

- Manisha Kapasiawala, Science Fellow, Department of Finance
- Andrew Hull, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Meghan Hertel, Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Valerie Termini, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Sonja Petek, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. How will the positions requested work together to prevent the spread of golden mussels? How does the department expect the boating inspection process to operate?
2. How will these positions support the Delta?
3. How will these positions support water managers that are responsible for managing the impacts of mussels on their operations?
4. Is there funding available to assist water managers directly (i.e. grants)? If yes, what is available?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold open.

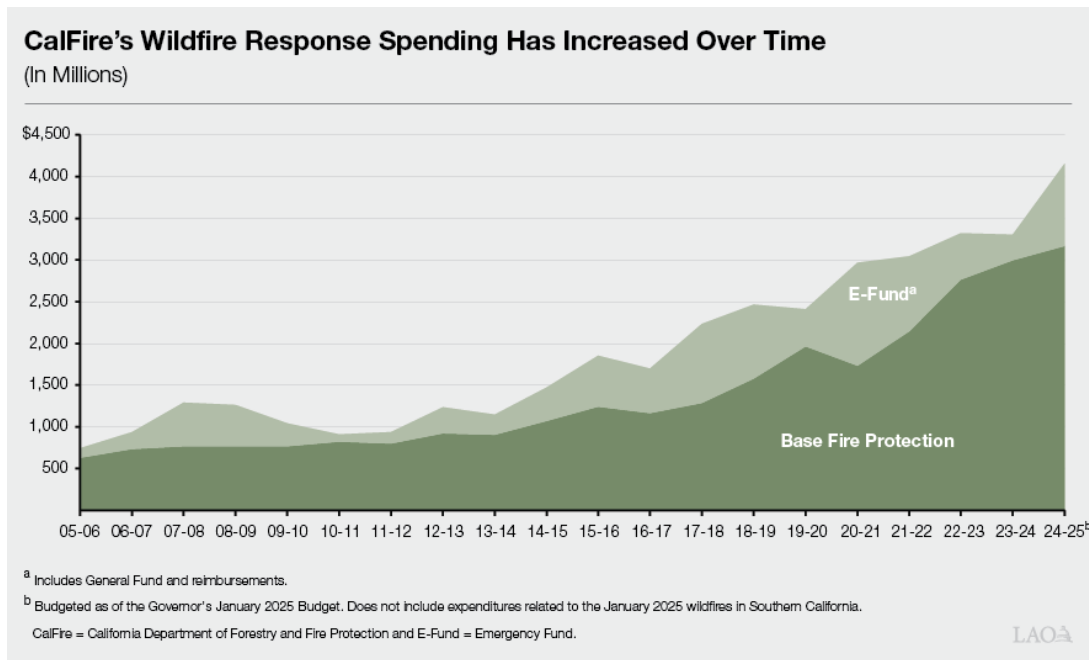
Various

**Issue 2: Wildfire Prevention and Response: An Overview of Spending**

*\*To review the most up-to-date figures on spending, please refer to the LAO’s handout*

**Spending on Wildfire Response**

CalFire’s total spending for wildfire response has grown significantly over the past several years—from \$2.2 billion in 2017-18 to \$4.2 billion in 2024-25 (an 86 percent increase).

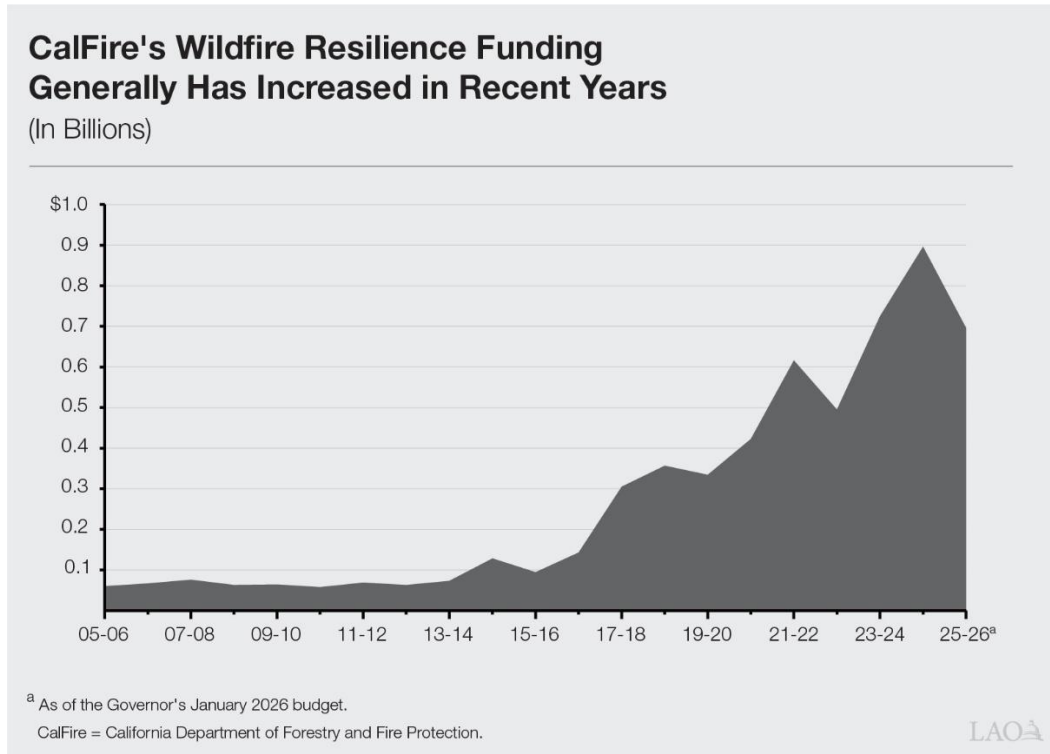


CalFire’s wildfire response budget has two components. First, CalFire has a base wildfire protection budget, which pays for the department’s everyday firefighting operations, including salaries, facility maintenance, and other predictable and anticipated costs. Driven by numerous discrete augmentations, CalFire’s expenditures from its base wildfire response budget have grown significantly in recent years. Notably, some of the recent augmentations still are in the process of being phased in. As such, absent any future actions to reduce funding, these totals will continue to grow. When fully implemented, we estimate that these already-adopted proposals will increase CalFire’s base budget for wildfire response by at least another \$600 million annually above the estimated 2024-25 level.

Second, CalFire has an amount budgeted under what is known as the Emergency Fund (E-Fund), which is intended to enable the department to pay for the costs of responding to large wildfires, such as overtime and equipment used after the initial attack. As shown in the figure above, CalFire’s annual expenditures from the E-Fund have varied depending on factors such as the severity of a given wildfire season.

### Spending on Wildfire Prevention and Resilience

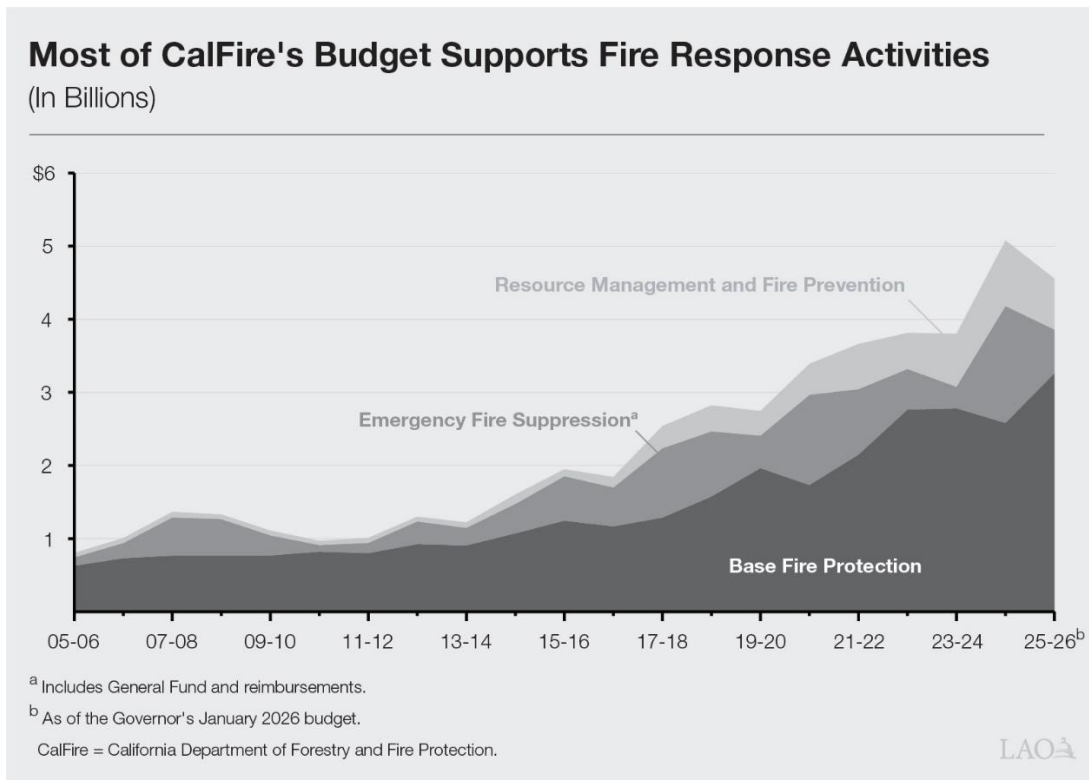
CalFire’s funding for wildfire resilience-related activities generally has grown over time, from about \$140 million in 2016-17 to an estimated roughly \$440 million in 2024-25. However, as shown in the figure, these funding amounts have varied from year to year due to the one-time nature of many of the augmentations the state has provided.



The funding provided—intended to improve the state’s resilience to wildfires by reducing the likelihood that wildfires will occur and lessening associated damage when they do—has increased.

### Comparing Spending on Response versus Prevention/Resilience

As illustrated in the figure below, the proportional share of CAL FIRE’s budget dedicated to wildfire prevention is significantly smaller than funding dedicated to base fire protection. However, it is important to note that CAL FIRE is not the only state department involved in wildfire resilience and prevention activities.

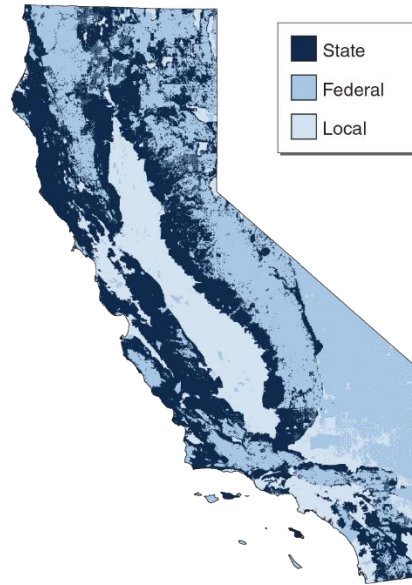


Funding for many other departments for such activities—such as various state conservancies—also has generally increased in recent years as a result of the recent wildfire and forest resilience budget packages and other augmentations.

### State Responsibility Area, Local Responsibility Area, and Federal Responsibility Area

In California, wildfire protection responsibility is divided into three jurisdictional categories: State Responsibility Area (SRA), Local Responsibility Area (LRA), and Federal Responsibility Area (FRA). These categories determine which level of government has primary fiscal and administrative responsibility for wildland fire prevention and suppression. These distinctions are about who is accountable for managing and funding fire protection on a given landscape, rather than who physically responds to a fire, as California relies heavily on a statewide mutual aid system.

Responsibility Areas for Wildland Fire Protection



State Responsibility Areas are lands where the state, through CAL FIRE, is responsible for wildland fire protection. These areas are generally unincorporated, non-federal lands characterized by wildland vegetation and watershed values.

In contrast, Local Responsibility Areas fall under the jurisdiction of cities, counties, and local fire districts, which are responsible for both structural and wildland fire protection within their boundaries and fund these services through local revenue sources. Much of the built environment - generally referred to as developed areas where structures and infrastructure are present, including cities, towns, and suburban communities – is in the LRA.

Federal Responsibility Areas consist of lands owned or managed by the federal government, including national forests, parks, and Bureau of Land Management lands, where agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have primary responsibility for fire management. Although these jurisdictional lines define authority and cost responsibility, wildfire response in practice is highly coordinated across all levels of government, with resources routinely shared across SRA, LRA, and FRA during incidents.

**Panel**

- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. What are the State’s ongoing sources of funding for wildfire prevention and resilience?

2. Why does understanding the different responsibility areas in the State matter when it comes to funding wildfire resilience activities?
3. What factors should the Legislature consider when determining how to spend finite resources on an array of wildfire resilience activities?
4. What options could the State explore to secure ongoing funding for wildfire prevention activities?

**Staff Recommendation:** Informational, no action needed.

**Issue 3: What does Successful Wildfire Prevention and Resilience Look Like?**

As discussed in the previous item, the State has made significant investments over the past several years to improve wildfire resilience across California's diverse landscapes. However, a persistent challenge is illustrating the value of these efforts, as the benefits of proactive land management are often defined by the absence of harm and by events that did not occur.

The purpose of this discussion item is to learn about what successful wildfire prevention and resilience projects look like and how we can more effectively communicate these success stories. Improving how success is defined and shared is critical to helping Californians understand the value of wildfire prevention and resilience work and the importance of sustained investments in the future.

**Measuring Effectiveness**

A key question contemplated both by the Legislature and the Administration is how to best evaluate the effectiveness of projects and investments. There are several tools and initiatives the State has developed to begin answering this question. The goal of these programs is to better manage adapting landscapes and guide future investments in landscape health and wildfire resilience.

These programs leverage data and perform assessments to understand the impact and progress of the State's wildfire resilience programs, providing a more holistic view of change within ecosystems. Some of these programs include:

1. Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting

CAL FIRE's Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Reporting program is intended to evaluate the impacts vegetation management treatments have on fire behavior and highlight how fuel reduction activities not only assist in suppression efforts, but how they protect life, property, and the natural resources of California.

Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Reporting relies on an automated process to overlay new wildfire incidents with projects in The CAL FIRE Management Activity Project Planning & Event Reporter to identify where fuel treatment projects are impacted by wildfire. Identified projects are surveyed and verified by CAL FIRE unit personnel, reports are generated and shared on CAL FIRE's website, and the information is displayed on an interactive data dashboard. An image of the dashboard can be found below.



As mentioned, CAL FIRE units produce reports that provide a narrative describing how specific projects were effective in mitigating risk and assisting crews responding to fires. Positive fuel treatment impacts are assessed based on whether the project: assisted with fire containment and ingress/egress, reduced property damage, or changed fire behavior. Change in fire behavior is determined based on whether the project halted rate of spread, slowed rate of spread, or reduced the fire intensity. Projects are also assessed on their contribution to control of fire based on whether primary or secondary containment lines were utilized and whether the project provided ingress/egress for fire suppression personnel.

2. California Wildfire and Landscape Interagency Treatment Dashboard

The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force established the Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Interagency Tracking System and Dashboard. This dashboard provides a single repository for recently completed projects across California from over a dozen federal and State agencies to track progress towards targets to reduce catastrophic wildfire and promote healthy landscapes.

These data assist wildfire incident response crews, inform strategic planning, provide public transparency, and enable monitoring and impact assessments.



### Illustrating Success

Despite significant state investment in wildfire prevention and resilience, defining and communicating “success” remains inherently challenging. Public attention and media coverage are overwhelmingly oriented toward catastrophic wildfire events. It’s uncommon for stories to highlight the conditions that prevent outcomes from being worse. As a result, prevention and resilience work is often invisible by design: when fuel treatments, prescribed fire, or defensible space efforts are effective, they may simply result in a fire that burns less intensely, spreads more slowly, or is more easily contained. These outcomes are difficult to observe and even harder to attribute directly to a specific investment.

Unlike response activities, which produce immediate and measurable outcomes, the success of resilience investments is often defined by what did not occur: homes not lost, communities not evacuated, ecosystems not disrupted. While the state is making progress in evaluating these impacts, such as tracking how wildfires interact with treated areas and incorporating fire behavior modeling, these approaches are evolving. Furthermore, translating investments into clear, accessible narratives remains a challenge. Bridging this gap is critical to ensuring the public can better understand the value of sustained, proactive investment in wildfire resilience, even in the absence of visible disaster.

#### Panel

- Joe Tyler, Director & Chief, CAL FIRE
- Patrick Wright, Director, California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force
- Brittany Covich, Policy & Outreach Division Chief, Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

#### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. What has the State done to better measure the effectiveness of our wildfire resilience and prevention activities? How have the metrics for defining effectiveness changed over time?
2. What is an example project that your agency conducted that illustrates the effectiveness of preventing future harm caused by fire? What can the State do to elevate these success stories?
3. How does having healthy landscapes improve the safety of the built environment?
4. How has the State used the tools which collect data and measure effectiveness to assist with prioritizing future projects? What factors are considered currently?
5. Is there a plan to expand the fuels treatment effectiveness reporting model to projects that are conducted by other agencies beyond CAL FIRE? What lessons-learned do we have from building the Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Interagency Tracking System and Dashboard which collects data across multiple agencies?
6. What is the single most important takeaway you would want members of the subcommittee to leave with from this discussion?

**Staff Recommendation:** Informational, no action needed.

**Issue 4: Impacts of Cap-and-Invest on Wildfire and Forest Resilience – SB 901 Funding**

Since 2018, a portion of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) has been dedicated to wildfire prevention activities. SB 901 (Chapter 626, 2018, Dodd) was the enabling legislation that created this ongoing appropriation of GGRF for wildfire resilience activities, including healthy forest and fire prevention programs, projects that improve forest health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by uncontrolled wildfires, and prescribed fire, other fuel reduction projects.

CAL FIRE has used this funding for a variety of wildfire prevention programs as noted in the following chart:

<b>GGRF Funding (in millions) for Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience (SB 901) by Program and Fiscal Year</b>					
<b>Program</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27 Proposed</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Forest Health	\$109M	\$79M	\$65M	\$43M	<b>\$296M</b>
Wildfire Prevention Grants	\$35M	*\$65M	\$80M	\$43M	<b>\$223M</b>
California Conservation Corps	\$5M	\$5M	\$5M	\$5M	<b>\$20M</b>
Fuels Crews	\$30M	\$30M	\$30M	\$30M	<b>\$120M</b>
Forest Health Research Program	\$4.5M	\$4.5M	\$4.5M	\$4.5M	<b>\$18M</b>
Wildfire Resilience (Forest Legacy, California Forest Improvement)	\$5M	\$5M	\$5M	\$5M	<b>\$20M</b>
CAL FIRE Staffing & Operations	\$11M	\$11M	\$17.5M	\$11M	<b>\$50M</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$200M</b>	<b>\$200M</b>	<b>\$200M</b>	<b>\$142M</b>	<b>\$742M</b>

*\*\* \$65 million in 2024-25 was backfilled by the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund*

Reauthorization of the Cap-and-Invest Program under SB 840 and AB 1207 modified the allocations of GGRF revenues starting in 2026-27. Under the new tiering system in SB 840, the SB 901/Wildfire Prevention funding is in tier 3. This means that the \$200 million set aside for wildfire prevention is available after the commitments outlined in tiers 1 and 2 are fulfilled. Put another way, if GGRF is available after the allocations in the first two tiers are completed, then the \$200 million for wildfire prevention will be funded.

Based on its auction projections and interpretation of SB 840, Department of Finance does not anticipate GGRF will have adequate revenues in 2026-27 to support the full amounts identified for the Tier 3 programs in SB 840, including for wildfire prevention activities.

Instead, Department of Finance projects that the Tier 3 programs will be subject to proportional reductions in 2026-27 pursuant to the statutory methodology, receiving roughly 70 percent of the amounts specified in statute. Wildfire prevention/SB 901 activities are projected to receive \$142 million.

### Trailer Bill Language:

The Administration is also proposing trailer bill language that would make statutory changes to the Cap-and-Invest Program.

As it relates to wildfire prevention funding, the Administration is proposing to remove the percentages that guided how the \$200 million would be split among healthy forest and fire prevention programs and prescribed fire and other fuel reduction projects.

*(E) The sum of two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection ~~and allocated as follows:~~ **for any of the following activities:***

*(i) ~~Eighty-two and one-half percent for healthy~~ **Healthy** forest and fire prevention programs and projects that improve forest health and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases caused by uncontrolled wildfires.*

*(ii) ~~Seventeen and one-half percent for the~~ **The** completion of prescribed fire and other fuel reduction projects through proven forestry practices consistent with the recommendations of the California Forest Carbon Plan, including the operation of year-round prescribed fire crews and implementation of a research and monitoring program for climate adaptation.*

### Panel

- Julianne Rolf, Staff Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. What is the immediate fiscal year impact on the wildfire resilience/ SB 901 funding? How does the tiering structure affect the timing of when CAL FIRE will receive GGRF?
2. What would CAL FIRE be able to do that it currently cannot do if the Legislature were to approve the proposed Cap-and-Invest cleanup trailer bill language related to the wildfire resilience funding?
3. Are there specific programs and prevention activities that uniquely benefit from GGRF being available? For example, bond funds have specific limitations on uses that GGRF does not have. Are there specific programs that the Administration would prioritize funding with GGRF given the projected reduction in revenues moving forward?
4. Can the department share more details about what is funded under CAL FIRE staffing and operations?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 5: Prop. 4 – Wildfire and Forest Resilience 2026-27 Spending Plan**

Proposition 4 includes a total of \$1.5 billion for a variety of activities related to wildfire and forest resilience. As shown in the figure below, the Governor proposes to appropriate \$314 million in 2026-27. After accounting for the \$181 million appropriated in 2024-25 (Early Action), and \$417 million in 2025-26, this would leave \$588 million – or 39% – available for future years.

**Chapter 3. Wildfire & Forest Resilience**  
(\$ in Millions)

Department	Program	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27 Proposed	Bond Total
Office of Emergency Services	Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program	\$0	\$13	\$26	\$135
Dept. of Conservation	Regional Forest & Fire Capacity Program	\$0	\$10	\$51	\$185
	Forest & Vegetative Waste Removal for Wildfire Mitigation	\$0	\$11	\$15	\$50
CAL FIRE		\$0	\$31	\$39	
Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Regional Projects	\$0	\$45	\$0.3	\$170
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy		\$0	\$15	\$0	
CAL FIRE	Forest Health Program	\$10	\$82	\$37	\$175
	Local Fire Prevention Grants	\$0	\$81	\$58	\$185
	Fire Training Center	\$0	\$3	\$5	\$25
	Fuel Reduction, Structure Hardening, Defensible Space, Reforestation & Targeted Acquisitions	\$0	\$30	\$20	\$50
	Fire Ignition Detection Technology	\$0	\$23	\$2	\$25
	Reduce Wildfire Risk Related to Electricity Transmission	\$0	\$0	\$15	\$35
	Dept. of Parks & Recreation	Forest Health & Watershed Improvement Projects	\$0	\$33	\$33

Sierra Nevada Conservancy		\$31	\$0.1	\$0.04	\$34
Tahoe Conservancy		\$24	\$0.2	\$0.2	\$26
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy		\$31	\$0.4	\$0.4	\$34
State Coastal Conservancy		\$31	\$0.3	\$0.3	\$34
Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy	Watershed Improvement & Wildfire Resilience	\$31	\$0.2	\$0.4	\$34
San Diego River Conservancy		\$24	\$0.04	\$0.2	\$26
Wildfire Conservancy		\$0	\$14	\$0.2	\$15
California Fire Foundation		\$0	\$14	\$0.2	\$15
California Conservation Corps	Demonstrated Job Projects	\$0	\$10	\$12	\$50
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$181</b>	<b>\$417</b>	<b>\$314</b>	<b>\$1500</b>

**Descriptions of Programs for Proposed Spending**

Below are brief descriptions of the programs with proposed investments in the administration’s spending plan:

- Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program (home hardening) – partnership grant program between CalFire and CalOES where grantees work with individual homeowners in neighborhoods to harden their homes against wildfires.
  - CalOES and CAL FIRE plan to expand the California Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program with the proposed \$26 million to interested communities identified on the Fire Risk Reduction Community List, as outlined in PRC 4290.1. This list is maintained by the Board of Forestry and Fire protection and identifies, “A list of local agencies located in a State Responsibility Area or a Local Responsibility Area Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, which meet fire planning best practices.”
- Regional Forest and Fire Capacity – housed in the Department of Conservation; block grants for local and regional efforts to assess the resilience of their forests and communities, identify forest health and wildfire prevention priorities, build local partner capacity, and develop a pipeline of shovel ready fuels reduction projects.

- The Administration has proposed an accelerated timeline for this program in line with its broader efforts to accelerate wildfire and forest resilience work. Program evaluations conducted on existing general fund grants estimate that the department will have 24 Regional Partnerships with complete Regional Priority Plans at the end of the general fund grant term in FY27-28.

Approximately eight regional partnerships are ready for investment this fiscal year, eight are anticipated to be completed in FY 2026-27, and eight should be completed in FY 2027-28. On the basis of that completion timeline, the department is proposing to deploy the majority of Climate Bond funds in three rounds over the next three years.

- Forest & Vegetative Waste Removal for Wildfire Mitigation – long-term capital infrastructure to use forest and other vegetative waste removed from forests for noncombustible uses; builds on Department of Conservation’s existing Biomass Utilization Program.
  - The department plans on providing a single round of implementation funding for the large, non-combustion energy infrastructure component of the funding in this section – in light of the reduction to this program in the 2024-25 budget.

The department also plans on launching two other smaller programs with this suballocation for:

- mass timber buildings, which we’ll structure utilizing successes gained from “mass timber accelerator” programs run in other states; the department plans to offer this funding in three tranches
  - funding for research supporting wood utilization infrastructure; the department plans on offering this in two tranches
- Regional Projects (CalFire and Sierra Nevada Conservancy) – block grants that will fund regional, landscape-scale forest management projects including a myriad of activities such as fuels reduction, prescribed fire and cultural burning, reforestation, pest management, wildfire prevention planning, and education; builds on the existing work of the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.
    - CAL FIRE has not opened solicitation for this funding.
  - Forest Health Program - grants for landscape-scale projects to regionally based partners to do reforestation, fuels reduction, pest management, prescribed fire, and forest biomass utilization.
    - CAL FIRE anticipates opening solicitation for this grant program in spring 2026, conducting application review in summer 2026, and announcing awards in fall 2026. CAL FIRE’s Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grant Program will be receiving \$10 million of the Forest Health Proposition 4 funding from 2025-26.

- Wildfire Prevention Grants – grants for hazardous fuels reduction, education, and wildfire prevention planning near fire-threatened communities; housed with the Office of State Fire Marshal’s Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division.
  - CAL FIRE reports that the tentative application period for FY 2025-26 is March 2026, with awards announced in 2026. The tentative application period for FY 2026-27 is open in winter, with awards in the late summer of 2027.
- Fire Training Center (and Prescribed Fire Learning Hub) – \$20 million would be used for infrastructure upgrades at CalFire’s Lone Training Center; \$5 million would be used to establish a Prescribed Fire Learning Hub website where individuals, private burn associations, and land owners would find information about beneficial fire.
  - Administered by the CAL FIRE Prescribed Fire program staff, the Learning Hub will coordinate training opportunities for public and private beneficial fire practitioners operating in ecosystems throughout California.
- Fuel Reduction, Structure Hardening, Defensible Space, Reforestation, and Targeted Acquisitions – to conduct fuel reduction, structure hardening, create defensible space, reforestation, or targeted acquisitions to improve forest health and fire resilience.
  - \$19.6 million of this allocation will be used over the next three years for technical and financial assistance to help homeowners in wildfire-vulnerable areas implement defensible space mitigations, including creation of an ember-resistant zone within five feet of a home or structure (known as Zone 0) to reduce the potential for structure ignition during a wildfire.
- Fire Ignition Technology – fully appropriated for low earth orbit satellite technology, including FireSat satellites and related resources, AlertCalifornia for wildfire detection camera-related technology, and a study within the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to test and evaluate use cases related to the use of autonomous aircraft for early ignition detection as well as suppression.
- Forest Health and Watershed improvement projects – administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation, funding for forest health and watershed improvement projects in forests and other habitats such as redwoods, conifers, oak woodlands, mountain meadows, chaparral, and coastal forests.
- Watershed improvement and forest resilience – administered by various state conservancies, funding would provide local assistance grants landscape-specific wildfire resilience activities such as removing and controlling invasive non-native plant species, enhancing safety for evacuation routes, fuels management projects, hazard tree removals, and purchasing equipment.
- Reduce Wildfire Risk Related to Electricity Transmission – \$15.2 million will be administered by CAL FIRE and coordinated with the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety

through grants to support fuels reduction around wildfire-vulnerable communities along established utility right of ways or other critical infrastructure to reduce ember production around communities.

- Demonstrated Job Projects – for the California Conservation Corps and Local Conservation Corps for the implementation climate resilience projects and projects to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and rehabilitate following natural disasters, declared emergencies, or climate-related impacts to communities.

### Panel

- Julianne Rolf, Staff Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Joe Tyler, Director & Chief, CAL FIRE

*\*Other department representatives are available to answer questions on specific suballocations within the 2026-27 spending plan*

### LAO Comments

The largest category of proposed funding in this chapter is \$58 million for CalFire to distribute local fire prevention grants for community hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention projects. Other large categories of funding include \$51 million for the Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity program, \$39 million for regional projects primarily administered by CalFire, and \$37 million for the forest health program.

CalFire's separate budget proposal to fund defensible space inspector positions on a permanent basis with General Fund interacts with the \$19.6 million in Proposition 4 funding proposed over the next three fiscal years to assist homeowners with defensible space mitigations. Some programs are also new, such as \$15.2 million for CalFire (in coordination with the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety) to undertake activities to reduce wildfire risk related to electricity transmission. As we discussed earlier, this initial year of program funding represents a key opportunity for the Legislature to weigh in on its priorities and provide guidance for how the administration should target these expenditures.

### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. What is the prescribed fire learning hub and what is the vision for how it will operate?
2. Can the Department of Conservation share what the intended split of the funding will be between the existing forest biofuels program, the mass timber accelerator program, and the funding for research?

- a. Who are the intended recipients for the mass timber accelerator program funding?
- b. Can the department expand more on how the funding for research supporting wood utilization infrastructure will be used?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 6: Prop. 4 – Operational Efficiencies Control Section**

The 2026-27 Prop. 4 spending plan includes budget bill language which would provide the Administration new authority in Control Section 15.04 to allow the Department of Finance to transfer Climate Bond funds appropriated by the Legislature to a designated primary state entity implementing a project funded by multiple Climate Bond allocations.

The Administration is proposing this language in response to the following language from the Section 90620 of the climate bond, “Funds allocated pursuant to this division may be used by the Natural Resources Agency and its departments, boards, and conservancies to collaboratively fund projects at a landscape or multijurisdictional scale to provide multiple benefits.”

**Background:**

Currently, departments that may wish to jointly invest from individual programs to a regional-scale project to accomplish transformative, multi-benefit objectives must each execute separate grant agreements with a recipient grantee(s). The grantee then must report and invoice to multiple entities for one large project, creating complexity for accurately assessing costs to each of the appropriate agencies, staging project implementation, and preparing various and often redundant reporting.

For departments that agree to align funding for a large-scale project, the Control Section authority will enhance operational efficiencies by facilitating the transfer of Climate Bond funds to a primary state entity responsible for landscape or multijurisdictional scale project implementation. This will increase transparency and tracking of Climate Bond expenditures and will reduce the burden on grantees by streamlining grant administration and reporting to only the primary state entity.

**Language:**

*Section 15.04. (a) The Department of Finance may transfer any portion of any Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4) appropriation from the state entity receiving the appropriation to another state entity, for the following purposes:*

*(i) To collaboratively fund projects at a landscape or multijurisdictional scale to provide multiple benefits consistent with Section 90620 of the Public Resources Code. A single state entity may be designated as the primary state entity for the purposes of receiving transferred Proposition 4 funds and administering a landscape or multijurisdictional scale project that meets the purpose or purposes specified in Proposition 4.*

*(ii) To avoid delays related to cashflow constraints resulting from reimbursements in arrears when a state entity awards or assigns funding pursuant to Proposition 4 to another state entity by instead providing the funding directly to the state entity receiving the award or assignment.*

*(b) To receive consideration for approval of a transfer pursuant to paragraph (i) of subdivision (a) of this section, the primary state entity must notify Finance within 30 days of finalizing an agreement with each participating state entity. The notification shall include: the project name and description, total estimated cost of the project, the amount of funding to be contributed by the participating entity, the amount or amounts and the Proposition 4 section or sections authorizing the subject funding for each needed transfer, and the amounts by funding source of all other approved or pending state entity contributions to the project.*

*(c) The Department of Finance may create new items as necessary to facilitate the transfer and expenditure of funds as authorized pursuant to this section.*

*(d) Upon processing of any transfer authorized pursuant to this section, the state entity receiving the transfer shall notify the California Natural Resources Agency to assist with tracking of transferred funds. The notification shall include the project name, the amount of funding transferred, and a list of the item or items of appropriation impacted, including dollar amounts by item, and the associated Proposition 4 sections authorizing the funding.*

#### Panel

- Bryan Cash, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, California Natural Resources Agency
- Lizzie Urie, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Courtney Massengale, Staff Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

#### LAO Comments

***Proposes Budget Language Intended to Facilitate Large-Scale Projects and Reduce Administrative Burdens.*** The administration proposes a new budget control section with two primary provisions aimed at reducing the administrative burdens associated with implementing large-scale or state-administered Proposition 4-funded projects.

- ***Allows State Departments to Consolidate Multiple Proposition 4 Grant Program Funds for Landscape-Level Projects.*** The proposed control section would allow state departments that each administer different Proposition 4 grant programs to jointly fund projects at a landscape and/or multi-jurisdictional scale and consolidate funding, administration, and oversight under one lead department. Under the proposed language, participating departments would identify an applicable project; select a lead department; and enter into agreements that, among other details, would estimate the total amount of funding needed for the project and the Proposition 4 contribution from each entity. The lead department would notify the Department of Finance (DOF) once all of the agreements are finalized and, if it approves the arrangement, DOF would transfer budget spending authority from the participating departments to the lead department. The lead department would then work directly with the grantee to complete the project with the consolidated funding, including ensuring compliance with bond requirements.

- **Streamlines Inter-Department Grant Process for State-Administered Projects.** In some cases, one state department might apply for and be awarded a Proposition 4 grant from a different state department to undertake a project. To help avoid delays and cash flow constraints that may arise from this process, the proposed control section would permit DOF to transfer the spending authority directly to the receiving department, rather than that department needing to “front” the money from its own budget and then request and wait for reimbursement.

**Proposed Control Section Seems Reasonable, but Lacks Legislative Reporting.** We find the administration’s proposed control section to be reasonable. Easing departments’ ability to jointly fund landscape and multi-jurisdictional projects would be consistent with bond language that encourages these types of projects. Moreover, streamlining the funding process for state-administered projects could help departments undertake the work more quickly and efficiently. However, while the proposed control section requires notification and approval of DOF before spending authority changes, it does not include legislative notification. The Legislature might benefit from receiving summary information about the degree to which the proposed control section is used—both to help it track project funding and implementation, as well as to understand possible strategies for easing administrative burdens and potential unintended consequences.

#### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can the Administration provide an example where having this budget bill language would be beneficial for reducing administrative burdens and increasing access to bond funds?
2. Are there certain sections of the bond where the Administration anticipates this control section will be used more heavily? Which sections are those and why?
3. Is there a reason the Administration is proposing this as budget bill language and not trailer bill language?
4. Will this streamlining measure only affect grantees that have already been awarded funds? Or does the Administration anticipate using this authority to combine pots of funding that are currently administered by two separate departments into a single multi-benefit grant?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 7: Prop. 4 – Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions 2026-27 Spending Plan**

Proposition 4 includes a total of \$1.2 billion for a variety of activities in the biodiversity and nature-based climate solutions chapter. As shown in the figure below, the Governor proposes to appropriate \$199 million in 2026-27. After accounting for the \$390 million in 2025-26, this would leave \$602 million – or 50% - available for future years.

**Chapter 6. Biodiversity & Nature-Based Solutions**  
(\$ in Millions)

Department	Program	2025-26	2026-27 Proposed	Bond Total
Wildlife Conservation Board	Protect & Enhance Fish & Wildlife Resources & Habitats	\$256	\$111	\$668
	Improve Habitat Connectivity and Establish Wildlife Crossings & Corridors	\$21	\$21	\$100
	San Andreas Corridor Program	\$0	\$20	\$80
	Southern Ballona Creek Watershed	\$20	\$2	\$22
Baldwin Hills & Urban Watersheds Conservancy		\$13	\$0.4	\$48
Tahoe Conservancy		\$5	\$3	\$29
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy		\$2	\$2	\$11
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy	Climate Change Risk Reduction & Public Access	\$4	\$15	\$29
San Diego River Conservancy		\$8	\$0.2	\$48
Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy		\$10	\$11	\$48
San Joaquin River Conservancy		\$5	\$5	\$11

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy		\$25	\$7	\$48
Sierra Nevada Conservancy		\$10	\$0.1	\$48
Natural Resources Agency	Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Program	\$9	\$0.2	\$10
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$390</b>	<b>\$199</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>

**Descriptions of Programs for Proposed Spending**

Below are brief descriptions of the programs with proposed investments in the Administration’s spending plan:

- Protect & Enhance Fish & Wildlife Resources & Habitats – Prop. 4 includes \$870 million for the purpose of protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife resources and habitat and achieve the state’s biodiversity, public access, and conservation goals.
- Improve Habitat Connectivity and Establish Wildlife Crossings & Corridors – \$21 million of \$100 million would be available in the budget year under the Administration’s spending plan for improving habitat connectivity and establishing wildlife crossings and corridors to be administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board. This would be in addition to the \$21 million provided in the current year budget.
- San Andreas Corridor Program – the Administration is proposing to appropriate \$20 million to fund projects to protect and restore wildlife corridors along the inner Coast Ranges and the San Andreas Fault.
  - The boundaries of the San Andreas Corridor have not yet been determined in statute or budget bill language for this administering the funds for this program.
- Southern Ballona Creek Watershed – for projects for climate change adaptation improvements to protect, conserve, and restore the health and resilience of the southern Ballona Creek Watershed.
- Climate Change Risk Reduction & Public Access – \$320 million is available and spread across the various conservancies to reduce the risks of climate change impacts upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources, and increase public access. Allocations timelines for Prop. 4 funds differs across conservancies, as the Administration considered the following factors: (1) current staffing capacity; (2) the amount of uncommitted funds from previous budget packages; and (3) the number of shovel-ready projects to be supported with bond funding.
- Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Program – funding supports the return of ancestral lands to tribal ownership and stewardship, planning and implementation of habitat restoration

projects, protecting coast and oceans, advancing wildfire resiliency and cultural fire, and other multi-benefit nature-based solutions projects across California.

**Panel**

- Jennifer Norris, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board
- Bryan Cash, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, California Natural Resources Agency
- Andrew Hull, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Manisha Kapasiawala, Science Fellow, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can the Wildlife Conservation Board provide a status update on the awarding of funds appropriated in the 2025-26 budget given the APA exemption provided in AB 107?
2. Can the Administration share more about the specific projects that will be funded with the proposed \$30 million for Salton Sea restoration projects? Will these projects count under the 40% disadvantaged communities prioritization in Prop. 4?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

### 3540 Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

**Issue 8: Fixed-Wing Pilot Mechanics Contract Increases**

The Governor’s budget requests up to \$66,508,000 in fiscal year 2026-27 through 2028-29, \$69,636,000 in 2029-30, and \$74,149,000 ongoing from the General Fund for fixed-wing pilot and mechanics contract cost increases.

CAL FIRE’s Aviation Management Unit provides aviation assets and performs scheduled routine maintenance on the Department’s aerial fleet throughout the fire year. Since 2001, the State has contracted with aviation logistical support companies to provide personnel for the operation and maintenance of the state’s fleet of firefighting aircraft.

With nearly 70 fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, CAL FIRE operates the largest aerial firefighting fleet in the world. It is the Department’s responsibility to ensure that there are no interruptions in maintenance activities necessary to keep the aircraft flying and that scheduled routine maintenance is performed annually. The aircraft assists with the Department’s goal to suppress 95 percent of all fires at ten acres or less by maintaining an aggressive initial attack capability. CAL FIRE’s tactical aircraft fleet provides support to ground crews, helping to slow a fire’s progression by allowing engines and crews to complete the suppression process.

### Current Operational Fleet

AIRCRAFT	TYPE	GALLONS CARRIED	MAXIMUM OPERATING SPEED
Air Tactical Aircraft			
16	Rockwell OV-10	N/A	258 mph
3	King Air A200	N/A	345 mph
Airtankers			
23	Grumman S-2T	1,200	270 mph
3	Lockhead C-130H	4,000	368 mph
Helicopters			
16	Sikorsky S70i CAL FIRE HAWK	1,000	160 mph
7	Bell UH-1H Super Huey	360	126 mph
Total Aircraft: 68			

According to the Administration, the additional funding requested in this proposal is necessary for the follow-on contracted services of fixed-wing pilot and mechanics contract cost increases. This augmentation is particularly critical given the year-over-year trend in ignitions and acreage burned. Because of the expanding aviation program and an increase in the frequency and severity of wildfires, there is a greater need for aerial firefighting. This requires more pilots to operate fixed-wing aircraft for fire suppression as well as maintenance mechanics for the Department’s fixed-wing and rotary fleet.

As the demand for skilled pilots and maintenance mechanics rises, so do the wages and benefits needed to attract and retain qualified personnel. Additionally, more frequent and intensive use of aircraft due to increased wildfire activity results in higher maintenance and repair costs. Vendors must ensure that aircraft are in top condition, which requires more labor and time, increasing the overall cost of the contract.

Amentum Services Inc. currently provides pilots to operate fixed-wing aircraft and mechanics for the maintenance of the Department's fixed-wing and rotary fleet. Per the current contract, Amentum provides 108 pilots/Flight Engineers and 171 mechanics for a total of 279 pilots and mechanics.

### Panel

- Jake Sjolund, Deputy Director, Fire Protection, CAL FIRE
- Steve Robinson, Assistant Deputy Director, Aviation and Mobile Equipment, CAL FIRE
- Julianne Rolf, Staff Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Vy Nguyen, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

### LAO Comments

Within the LAO's recommended framework for approaching budget decisions in the natural resources and environmental budgets, the LAO found that this proposal addresses critical health and safety concerns, and merits consideration of budget-year funding based on their assessment of the proposal.

- **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire): Fixed-Wing Aircraft Mechanic and Pilot Contract Increases.** The budget proposes \$66.5 million General Fund in 2026-27 and increasing amounts in subsequent years, growing to \$74.2 million ongoing in 2030-31, for CalFire to cover the increased costs of its air tanker and command center aircraft mechanic and pilot contracts. Without this funding, CalFire would not be able to use its air tanker and command center aircraft to respond to wildfires. Fewer aircraft available to respond to more frequent and severe wildfires in the state likely would increase the risk of harm to communities and their residents and increase the future costs of wildfire recovery.

### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can the Department share how contracts costs have increased over the past five years?
2. What are the driving factors for why a contract increase is necessary?
3. What is the size of the States fixed-wing fleet currently and is it projected to grow?

4. Can the Department share one example of how this fleet has assisted in achieving the Department's goal to suppress 95 percent of all fires at ten acres or less?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## Non-Presentation Items

### 3480 Department of Conservation

#### Issue 1: Maintaining and Strengthening Resilience of California's Seismic Network

The Governor's budget requests \$2,126,000 in fiscal year 2026-27 and \$1,870,000 in 2027-28, 2028-29, and 2029-30 from the Strong Motion Instrumentation and Seismic Hazard Mapping Fund and 10 permanent positions to maintain and upgrade the state's strong motion network, the largest seismic network in California.

#### LAO Comments:

Under the LAO's recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions, analysts found that this proposal addresses critical health and safety concerns, and merits consideration of budget-year funding based on their assessment of the proposal.

**Department of Conservation (DOC): Earthquake Monitoring.** The budget proposes \$2.1 million in 2026-27 and \$1.9 million in each of the subsequent three years from the Strong Motion Instrumentation and Seismic Hazard Mapping Fund to purchase equipment and add ten permanent positions to DOC's California Strong Motion Instrumentation Program. Through the earthquake monitoring network, the state keeps the earthquake early warning system operational and identifies weaknesses in critical infrastructure, which also helps inform building design and codes. However, this network currently has a maintenance backlog, including defunct seismic monitors and not enough field technicians to repair or replace them. This proposal is important to maintaining the state's capacity for structural integrity monitoring at critical locations, such as bridges, dams, tunnels, and hospitals, and mitigating public safety risks and higher disaster recovery costs that could result from earthquakes.

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

## 3540 Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

### Issue 2: Various Capital Outlay Proposals

The Governor's budget requests appropriations to address various capital outlay improvements for Department of Forestry and Fire Protection facilities.

#### General Fund Capital Outlay proposals:

1. Witch Creek Fire Station – Relocate Facility - \$3,300,000 General Fund for the acquisition phase of the Witch Creek Fire Station: Relocate Facility project, located in San Diego County. This is a new project. The total estimated project costs are \$25,450,000.
2. Parlin Fork Fire Center - Repair Kitchen - \$4,108,000 General Fund for the immediate repair of the kitchen at Parlin Fork Fire Center located in Mendocino County due to a structure fire. The location of the facility requires an on-site kitchen and the interim solution is costly and not well suited for long-term use.
3. Riverside Unit Headquarters: Relocate Facility - a supplemental appropriation of \$10,000,000 General Fund for the acquisition phase of the Riverside Unit Headquarters: Relocate Facility project, located in Riverside County. This is a continuing project. Total estimated project cost is \$110,476,000.
4. Hemet-Ryan Air Attack Base: Replace Facility - a supplemental appropriation of \$1,810,000 General Fund for the working drawings phase of the Hemet-Ryan Air Attack Base: Replace Facility project, located in Riverside County. This is a continuing project. Total estimated project costs are \$93,053,000. This additional authority is necessary to fund higher than expected design costs related to natural gas and sewer connections for the facility.
5. Hollister Air Attack Base/Bear Valley Helitack Base: Relocate Facilities - a supplemental appropriation of \$5,521,000 General Fund for the working drawings phases of the Hollister Air Attack Base/Bear Valley Helitack Base: Relocate Facilities project, located in San Benito County. Total estimated project cost is \$204,453,000. This supplemental authority is needed to include the relocation of the retardant pits and helipad as there is insufficient room to accommodate the larger modern aircraft as intended in the original proposal.
6. L.A. Moran Reforestation Center Improvements - a supplemental appropriation of \$1,213,000 General Fund for the preliminary plans phase of the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center (LAMRC) project, located in Yolo County. This is a continuing project. Total project costs are estimated at \$26,187,000. Additional funding is requested to include additional improvements in the project's scope which were originally intended to be funded through deferred maintenance funding from the 2021 Budget which was later reverted. These improvements are for the facility's seed lab and include updating the offices, storage X-

Ray room, seed separation area, a new HVAC system, electrical work, and other smaller improvements.

7. Humboldt-Del Norte Unit Headquarters: Relocate Facility - \$3,952,000 General Fund for the working drawings phase of the Humboldt-Del Norte Unit Headquarters: Relocate Facility project, located in Humboldt County. This is a continuing project. Total estimated project costs are \$69,180,000.
8. Property Acquisition: Happy Valley Fire Center - \$6,000,000 General Fund for the acquisition phase of Property Acquisition: Happy Valley Fire Center project located in Shasta County. This is a new project. The total estimated project costs are \$6,000,000.
9. Boggs Mountain Helitack Base: Relocate Facility - \$4,757,000 General Fund for the working drawings phase of the Boggs Mountain Helitack Base: Relocate Facility project, located in Lake County. This is a continuing project. Total estimated project cost is \$79,768,000.
10. Howard Forest Helitack Base: Replace Facility - \$1,898,000 General Fund for the preliminary plans phase for the Howard Forest Helitack Base: Replace Facility project to replace the existing facility in Mendocino County. This is a continuing project. Total estimated project costs are \$76,520,000.
11. Tehama Glenn Unit Headquarters: Relocate Facility - a supplemental appropriation of \$4,500,000 General Fund for the acquisition phase of the Tehama Glenn Unit Headquarters: Relocate Facility project. The project is located in Tehama County. The total estimated project costs are \$90,100,000.

#### **Lease-Revenue Bond Capital Outlay Proposals:**

1. Shasta Trinity Unit Headquarters / Northern Operations: Relocate Facility - \$247,502,000 in lease-revenue bonds for the construction phase of the Shasta Trinity Unit Headquarters / Northern Operations: Relocate Facility project, located in Shasta County. This is a continuing project. Total estimated project costs are \$261,077,000.

#### **LAO Comments:**

Under the LAO's recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions, analysts found that this proposal addresses critical health and safety concerns, and merits consideration of budget-year funding based on their assessment of the proposals.

**CalFire: Capital Outlay Projects.** CalFire proposes \$294.6 million (\$47.1 million from the General Fund and \$247.5 million in lease revenue bonds) in 2026-27 to acquire, plan, and construct 12 capital outlay projects. Once completed, the projects would relocate, repair, or replace facilities with significant health and safety deficiencies. Addressing these deficiencies likely would improve the health and safety of CalFire personnel as well as support the state's

wildfire response capacity through, for example, improved equipment maintenance and operational efficiency.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommend holding these COBCPs open, without prejudice, as they request General Fund.

**Issue 3: SB 345 Cleanup – Trailer Bill Language**

The Governor’s budget includes trailer bill language related to SB 345 (Hurtado, Chapter 312, 2025) and the California Fire Service Training and Education Program.

Background:

The California Fire Service Training Act establishes the California Fire Service Training and Education Program within the Office of the State Fire Marshal, which is responsible for managing the program and offering courses with guidance from the State Board of Fire Services.

Separately, the California Fire and Arson Training Act requires the State Fire Marshal to set minimum standards for fire protection personnel and instructors, develop training curricula, and maintain promotional examinations.

Existing law authorizes the State Fire Marshal to collect fees for seminars, conferences, and specialized training when state appropriations and other funding sources are insufficient, with revenues deposited into the California Fire and Arson Training Fund.

Request:

This proposal would instead authorize the collection of those fees only when state appropriations from sources other than the fund are insufficient to cover program costs.

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this trailer bill be approved when the Subcommittee takes action.

## 3600 Department of Fish and Wildlife

### Issue 4: Cannabis Impacted Lands

The Governor's budget requests 22 positions (permanent position authority only) to further assess, mitigate and remediate cannabis impacted lands owned by the department, California Native American Tribes, and local jurisdictions, in addition to increasing enforcement support in Northern California. The positions will be funded by the department's existing authority provided through the continuous appropriation from the Cannabis Tax Fund – Department of Fish and Wildlife, Environmental Restoration and Protection Account - Allocation 3 (Allocation 3).

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

### Issue 5: Nutria Eradication Program

The Governor's budget requests 1.0 permanent position, funding for existing staff and temporary help, \$8.2 million General Fund in fiscal year 2026-27, and \$8 million General Fund in 2027-28 and ongoing, to support the continued and expanded operations of the Nutria Eradication Program which addresses the spread of the invasive nutria species.

#### LAO Comments:

Under the LAO's recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions, analysts found that this proposal addresses critical health and safety concerns, and merits consideration of budget-year funding based on their assessment of the proposals.

**CDFW: Nutria Eradication Program.** The budget proposes \$8.2 million in 2026-27 and \$8 million in 2027-28 and ongoing from the General Fund, along with one position, to support CDFW's existing nutria eradication program. An invasive species that have been spreading in California since being detected in 2017, nutria carry pathogens and parasites that pose risks to human and animal health, damage flood-protection levees and water conveyance infrastructure with their burrowing behavior, destroy crops, degrade native vegetation, and contaminate water supplies. The Governor's proposal would backfill expiring one-time funding and expand the program. Providing this funding likely would prevent future higher state costs as nutria reproduce rapidly and unchecked populations can lead to expanding infestations.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**Issue 6: San Joaquin River Basin Spring and Fall-run Chinook Salmon Restoration**

The Governor's budget requests 3 permanent positions, resources for existing staff, \$5 million General Fund in fiscal year 2026-27 and \$5.4 million in 2027-28 and ongoing to provide necessary resources for the operation of the newly constructed San Joaquin Research and Conservation Hatchery Facility (SCARF), and to continue the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), and the Merced River Hatchery (MRH).

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**Issue 7: Reimbursement Position Authority**

The Governor's budget requests 21.5 positions (permanent position authority only) in fiscal year 2026-27 and ongoing, to replace temporary positions used to complete work historically funded by long-term reimbursement agreements.

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

**Issue 8: Protecting California's Federally Listed Species (AB 1319)**

The Governor's budget requests 5 permanent positions, \$1.4 million General Fund in fiscal year 2026-27 and \$1.3 million in 2027-28 through 2031-32 to implement requirements imposed by Chapter 639, Statutes of 2025 (Assembly Bill 1319) through the bill's sunset date.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**3720 Coastal Commission****Issue 9: Public Education Program Support**

The Governor's budget requests \$183,000 one-time in 2026-27 from the California Beach & Coastal Enhancement Account to support a temporary position in the Public Education program. This temporary position is needed to support grant recipients, conduct outreach, broaden access to coastal educational opportunities, and help manage social media accounts.

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

## 3885 Delta Stewardship Council

### Issue 10: Information Security Officer

The Governor's budget requests \$185,000 ongoing and 1.0 permanent position from the General Fund to serve as the Council's Information Security Officer and address critical information technology (IT) gaps including security and privacy, assist with security monitoring and enhancement, and ensure alignment with mandated IT security regulations and policies.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

### Issue 11: Independent Peer Review for Science and Monitoring

The Governor's budget requests \$539,000 General Fund ongoing and 3.0 permanent positions to support the Council's Delta Science Program and the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) in performing independent scientific review, advice, and monitoring for the implementation of the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The Council also requests \$139,000 General Fund ongoing and the inclusion of annual budget bill language to cover statutorily required rate increases for the members of the Delta ISB.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**Various**

**Issue 12: Natural Resources Agency Chaptered Legislation Proposals**

The Governor’s budget requests resources from the General Fund and special funds to implement statutory requirements associated with legislation chaptered in 2025. Bills and funds requests are outlined in the table below:

2026-27 Governor’s Budget Natural Resources Agency Chaptered Legislation Proposals								
Dollars in Thousands								
BU	Department	Issue Title (Chapter/Bill)	Fund Source	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total Ongoing Positions
0540	Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency	Pathways to30x30 Stewardship Reporting (AB 900)	0001 (General Fund)	\$1,213	\$963	\$0	\$0	0.0
3600	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Oil Production: Safety, Reliability, and Affordability (SB 237)	0320 (Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund)	\$125	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
3720	California Coastal Commission	Categorical Exclusions for Affordable Housing (SB 484)	0001 (General Fund)	\$220	\$220	\$0	\$0	0.0
3720	California Coastal Commission	Accessory Dwelling Unit Permitting in the Coastal Zone (AB 462)	0001 (General Fund)	\$217	\$217	\$217	\$217	1.0
3790	Department of Parks and Recreation	Off-Highway Electric Motorcycles (SB 586)	0263 (Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund)	\$200	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

**Issue 13: Natural Resources Agency Bond and Technical Proposals**

The Governor’s budget includes requests for appropriations and reappropriations from various bonds, reversions, reversions with associated new appropriations, and other non-bond technical adjustments to continue implementation of existing authorized programs.

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

This agenda and other publications are available on the Assembly Budget Committee’s website at: [Sub 4 Hearing Agendas | California State Assembly](#). You may contact the Committee at (916) 319-2099. This agenda was prepared by Christine Miyashiro.