

April 8, 2026

# Overview of Wildfire Prevention and Response Funding

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PRESENTED TO:

Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on Climate  
Crisis, Resources, Energy and Transportation  
Hon. Steve Bennett, Chair



LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

# Wildfire Response and Resilience Responsibilities Vary by Jurisdiction

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***Three Responsibility Areas for Wildfire Response and Resilience Activities in California.*** Different levels of government handle the primary administration and funding of wildfire response and resilience activities across three responsibility areas in California:

- ***Federal Responsibility Area (FRA).*** The federal Forest Service (Department of Agriculture) and Wildland Fire Service (Department of Interior) lead wildfire prevention and response efforts in the FRA. About half of the state's total acreage is in the FRA.
- ***State Responsibility Area (SRA).*** The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) is the lead state entity for wildfire prevention and response efforts in the SRA. Nearly one-third of the state's total acreage is in the SRA.
- ***Local Responsibility Area (LRA).*** Local city and county fire departments and local fire protection districts lead wildfire prevention and response efforts in the LRA. The state's remaining acreage (about 15 percent) is in the LRA.

***Federal, State, and Local Governments Coordinate Across Responsibility Areas.*** Though primary administration and funding responsibility is divided across these three categories of land, all levels of government generally coordinate with each other to respond to wildfires and, in some cases, to jointly complete wildfire resilience activities.



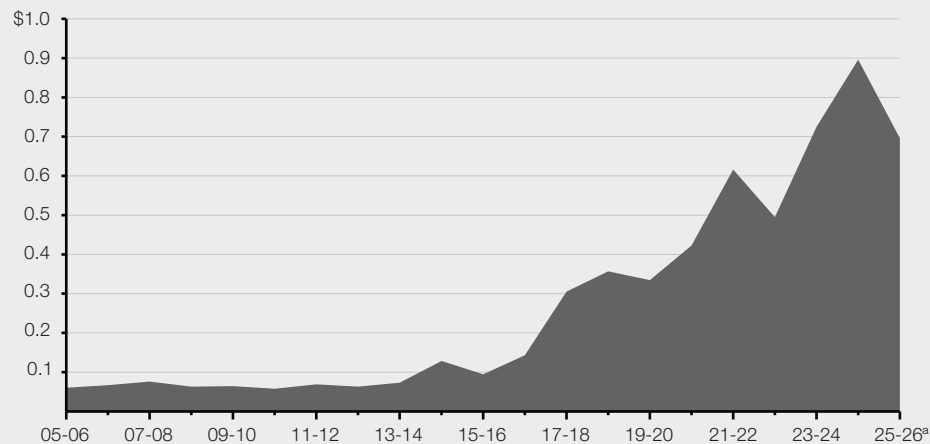
# State Has Increased Wildfire Resilience Funding

***Funding for Wildfire Resilience Activities Has Increased in Recent Years...*** CalFire's funding to perform wildfire resilience activities has grown over the past ten years—from about \$100 million in 2015-16 to about \$700 million in 2025-26.

- The state has also provided additional wildfire resilience funding to other state entities, such as state conservancies and state departments, which is not reflected in this figure.

## CalFire's Wildfire Resilience Funding Has Increased in Recent Years

(In Billions)



<sup>a</sup> As of the Governor's January 2026 budget.

CalFire = California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

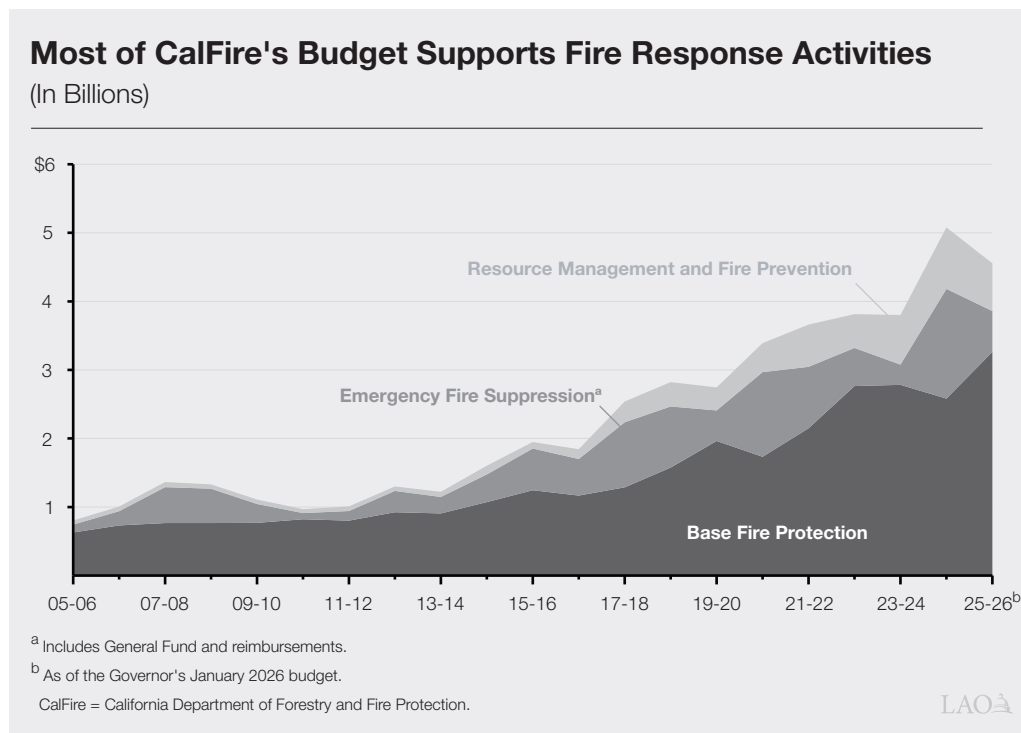
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# State Has Increased Wildfire Resilience Funding

(Continued)

**...But Most of State Funding Remains Focused on Wildfire Response Activities.** Funding for CalFire's wildfire resilience activities, however, remains a relatively small percentage (10 percent to 20 percent) of the department's overall budget. Most of CalFire's budget remains dedicated to its base fire protection program (such as firefighting personnel and equipment) and emergency fire suppression program (emergency fire response resources funded by the Emergency Fund).



# State Has Funded a Wide Variety of Wildfire Resilience Activities in Recent Years

## Summary of Recent State Wildfire and Forest Resilience Funding<sup>a</sup> 2020-21 Through 2025-26

(In Millions)

| Program                                            | Department       | Multiyear Total <sup>b</sup> |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Resilient Forests and Landscapes</b>            |                  | <b>\$2,063</b>               |
| Forest health and wildfire prevention <sup>c</sup> | CalFire          | \$990                        |
| Forest Health Program                              | CalFire          | 562                          |
| Stewardship of state-owned land                    | Various          | 246                          |
| Post-fire reforestation                            | CalFire          | 100                          |
| Forest Improvement Program                         | CalFire          | 75                           |
| Forest Legacy Program                              | CalFire          | 45                           |
| Tribal engagement                                  | CalFire          | 30                           |
| Reforestation nursery                              | CalFire          | 15                           |
| <b>Wildfire Fuel Breaks</b>                        |                  | <b>\$909</b>                 |
| Fire prevention grants                             | CalFire          | \$433                        |
| Fuels crews, research, and monitoring <sup>c</sup> | CalFire          | 210                          |
| Prescribed fire and hand crews                     | CalFire          | 129                          |
| CalFire unit fire prevention projects              | CalFire          | 70                           |
| Forestry Corps and residential centers             | CCC              | 67                           |
| <b>Regional Capacity</b>                           |                  | <b>\$412</b>                 |
| Conservancy projects                               | Various          | \$282                        |
| Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program          | DOC              | 130                          |
| <b>Forest Sector Economic Stimulus</b>             |                  | <b>\$93</b>                  |
| Workforce training grants                          | CalFire          | \$47                         |
| Climate Catalyst Fund Program                      | IBank            | 27                           |
| Transportation grants for woody material           | CalFire          | 10                           |
| Biomass to hydrogen/biofuels pilot                 | DOC              | 5                            |
| Market development                                 | OPR              | 4                            |
| <b>Science-Based Management and Other</b>          |                  | <b>\$114</b>                 |
| Monitoring and research                            | CalFire          | \$38                         |
| Remote sensing                                     | CNRA             | 30                           |
| Prescribed fire liability pilot                    | CalFire          | 20                           |
| Smoke and public health programs                   | CalEPA & CARB    | 12                           |
| State demonstration forests                        | CalFire          | 10                           |
| Interagency Forest Data Hub                        | CalFire          | 4                            |
| <b>Community Hardening</b>                         |                  | <b>\$49</b>                  |
| Defensible space inspectors                        | CalFire          | \$20                         |
| Land use planning and public education             | CalFire & UC ANR | 16                           |
| Home hardening                                     | OES & CalFire    | 13                           |
| <b>Total</b>                                       |                  | <b>\$3,640</b>               |

<sup>a</sup> As of the 2025-26 Budget Act. This figure does not include Proposition 4 (2024) allocations.

<sup>b</sup> Includes funding approved through the wildfire and forest resilience budget packages in 2021 and 2022.

<sup>c</sup> Part of the continuous Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund appropriation of \$200 million annually through 2025-26.

CalFire = California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; CCC = California Conservation Corps; DOC = Department of Conservation; IBank = California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank; OPR = Governor's Office of Planning and Research; CNRA = California Natural Resources Agency; CARB = California Air Resources Board; UC ANR = University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; and OES = Governor's Office of Emergency Services.



# State Has Funded a Wide Variety of Wildfire Resilience Activities in Recent Years

(Continued)

## Governor's Proposition 4 Proposal: Wildfire and Forest Resilience

(In Millions)

| Purpose                                                                                                                | Code Section | Implementing Departments | Bond Total     | 2025-26         | 2026-27 Proposed | Remaining Balance <sup>a</sup> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program                                                                                      | 91510        | OES                      | \$135          | \$13            | \$26             | \$95                           |
| Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program                                                                              | 91520(a)     | DOC                      | 185            | 10              | 51               | 123                            |
| Regional projects                                                                                                      | 91520(b)     | CalFire, SMMC, SNC       | 170            | 91 <sup>b</sup> | 39               | 38                             |
| Forest health program                                                                                                  | 91520(c)     | CalFire                  | 175            | 92 <sup>c</sup> | 37               | 45                             |
| Local fire prevention grants                                                                                           | 91520(d)     | CalFire                  | 185            | 81              | 58               | 45                             |
| Fire training center                                                                                                   | 91520(e)     | CalFire                  | 25             | 3               | 5                | 17                             |
| Forest health and watershed projects                                                                                   | 91520(f)     | Parks                    | 200            | 33              | 33               | 132                            |
| Fuel reduction, structure hardening, defensible space, reforestation, acquisitions                                     | 91520(g)     | CalFire                  | 50             | 30              | 20               | —                              |
| Watershed improvement, forest health, biomass utilization, chaparral and forest restoration, and workforce development | 91520(h)     | SNC                      | 34             | 31 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 2                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(i)     | TC                       | 26             | 24 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 1                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(j)     | SMMC                     | 34             | 32 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 1                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(k)     | SCC                      | 34             | 31 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 2                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(l)     | RMC                      | 34             | 31 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 2                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(m)     | SDRC                     | 26             | 24 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 2                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(n)     | WC                       | 15             | 14 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 1                              |
|                                                                                                                        | 91520(o)     | CFF                      | 15             | 14 <sup>d</sup> | —                | 1                              |
| Infrastructure for vegetative waste                                                                                    | 91530        | DOC                      | 50             | 11              | 15               | 24                             |
| Fire ignition detection technology                                                                                     | 91535        | CalFire                  | 25             | 23              | 2                | —                              |
| Reducing risk from electricity transmission                                                                            | 91540        | CalFire                  | 35             | —               | 15               | 19                             |
| Demonstrated jobs projects                                                                                             | 91545(a)     | CCC                      | 50             | 10              | 12               | 28                             |
| <b>Totals</b>                                                                                                          |              |                          | <b>\$1,500</b> | <b>\$598</b>    | <b>\$314</b>     | <b>\$577</b>                   |

<sup>a</sup> Amounts displayed are reduced by the estimated statewide bond costs, which the administration estimates will total \$11 million for the Wildfire and Forest Resilience chapter of the bond. The remaining balance also includes program delivery and state operations costs, some of which are scheduled for appropriation in future fiscal years.

<sup>b</sup> Of the \$91 million for regional projects in 2025-26, CalFire received \$31 million, SMMC received \$15 million, and SNC received \$45 million.

<sup>c</sup> Of the \$92 million for the forest health program in 2025-26, \$10 million was included for the Karuk Tribe fire resiliency center from Chapter 2 of 2025 (AB 100, Gabriel) and was available to expend beginning in April 2025.

<sup>d</sup> Provided through AB 100 in 2024-25.

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

OES = Governor's Office of Emergency Services; DOC = Department of Conservation; CalFire = California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; SMMC = Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy; SNC = Sierra Nevada Conservancy; Parks = California Department of Parks and Recreation; TC = Tahoe Conservancy; SCC = State Coastal Commission; RMC = San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy; SDRC = San Diego River Conservancy; WC = Wildfire Conservancy; CFF = California Fire Foundation; and CCC = California Conservation Corps.



# Ongoing State Funding for Wildfire Resilience Activities Is Limited

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***Notable Decrease in One-Time State Funding for Wildfire Resilience Activities Expected in Coming Years.*** While the state will be able to support some additional activities with Proposition 4, given the state budget deficit, the large allocations enabled by recent General Fund surpluses likely will not be available again in the near term.

***Some Limited Sources of Ongoing State Funding Currently Support Resilience Activities.*** While most recent funding has been limited term, two key ongoing sources include:

- ***Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF).*** The state's prior cap-and-trade program provided CalFire with a fixed annual allocation of \$200 million GGRF for wildfire resilience activities, consistent with Chapter 626 of 2018 (SB 901, Dodd). Starting in 2026-27, the new cap-and-invest structure will provide a variable annual allocation of up to \$200 million depending on the level of GGRF revenues available. Based on projected GGRF revenues as of the Governor's budget, the administration estimated an allocation of \$142 million in 2026-27 for these activities.
- ***CalFire Base Funding.*** A portion of CalFire's resource management and fire prevention state operations funding is ongoing and supports wildfire resilience activities such as defensible space inspections.

***Other Sources of Ongoing Funding Exist Outside the State Budget.*** The state budget is not the only source of support for wildfire resilience-related activities in California. In particular, utilities collect billions of dollars from ratepayers each year for fire prevention activities such as undergrounding power lines and clearing vegetation. Some longstanding federal grant programs also provide wildfire resilience funding, such as following a major disaster declaration.

