

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025-2026 SIMULATION SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO 60

Introduced by Senator Benjamin Allen

October 1, 2025

An act to establish a statewide program for wildfire prevention, and better prepare communities statewide from wildfires.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SB 60, as introduced, Allen. (Coauthored by PG&E, Edison, and Sempra) (Co-sponsored by Senator McGuire, Richardson, Henry Stern, Sasha Pérez and the Sierra Club) Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness Act.

Under existing law, the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program allows California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to provide grants to reduce wildfire risk through vegetation management, and community preparedness projects.

Existing law allows for eligible applicants such as local governments, special "fire" districts, Native American tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations. These applicants can perform vegetation management, creation or maintenance of defensible space, and the implementation of community wildfire protection and evacuation plans.

This bill would establish the Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness Program, run by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The program would provide \$7,500,000 in grants to local governments, special "Fire" districts, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations for wildfire prevention and preparedness projects.

This program would be optional for local governments and communities. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection would be required to submit an annual report to the Legislature and publish a publicly accessible website showing the funded projects and their outcomes. An evaluation would be due by January 1, 2029

Vote: Majority Appropriation: Yes Fiscal Committee: Yes Local Program: Yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SEC. 1. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness Act.

SEC. 2. For purposes of this act, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Defensible space" means the clearing, reduction, and modification of vegetation around structures and communities in order for a creation of a buffer zone which slows or stops the spread of wildfires.

(b) “Home hardening retrofits” means fire-resistant upgrades to buildings (residential or commercial) which includes ventilation and other openings covered with metal meshes, replacing combustible materials with fire-resistant ones.

(c) “Controlled burns” means there are planned and professionally monitored use of fire under conditions of high-risk areas to reduce excess vegetation and lower the risk of wildfires.

SEC. 3. Section 4123.8 is added to the public Resources Code to read:

(a) The Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness Program is established under the administration of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(b) California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection shall reward grants to eligible applicants, which include local governments, special “fire” districts, Native American tribal governments, and nonprofit community organizations.

(c) Participation in this program is voluntary for local governments and communities.

(d) Eligible projects can include but are not limited to:

(1) Vegetation management and hazardous fuel reduction.

(2) Creation and maintenance of defensible spaces.

(3) Home hardening retrofits in order to mitigate fire spreading.

(4) Evacuation routines and planning

(e) Controlled burns under the supervision of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection or other qualified personnel. Controlled burns shall be carried out with the following safeguards in mind:

(1) Internal fire rotations to not burn ecosystems that had excess fires.

(2) Avoid burns that can cause ecological harm or endanger neighboring residential areas.

(3) Consultation with Native American tribes to respect cultural values consistent with past practices.

(4) Considering the fire intensity according to the ecosystem

(5) Avoid thinning in old growth forests, and consider the weather conditions (windy, moist, temperature, etc.)

SEC. 4. Public Funding and Appropriations

(a) \$7,500,000 is from the General Fund for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to enact this program.

(b) At least 35% of funds must be directed to disadvantaged or high-risk wildfires communities, as defined by CalEnviroScreen or an equivalent risk assessment.

(c) At least 25% of funds must be allocated towards rural or unincorporated communities identified as a high-risk wildfire area.

(d) When deciding contracts funded under the Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness Act of 2025, at least 25% of contract must go to certified small businesses as defined by Section 14837 of the Government Code.

(e) Veteran-owned businesses may receive preference in the selection of contracts under this program, if it applies to the work being contracted

(f) Administrative costs of the program shall not exceed 5% of the appropriated funds.

Sec 5. Private funding

(a) A portion of the funds up to \$1,500,000 shall be available for wildfire prevention infrastructure projects in partnership with privately owned electric utilities. This includes Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric.

(b) The projects include, but are not limited to:

(1) Replacing aging or high-risk power poles.

(2) Underground power lines in high-risk fire areas

(3) Setting up or upgrading microgrids to improve resilience from wildfires

(c) Any utility receiving state funds under this act must provide a 50% minimum match of the total project costs

(4) Projects funded under this section must coordinate with local governments, organizations, and fire districts to uphold and maintain state safety standards in the affected areas.

Sec. 6. The Department must submit an annual report to the Legislature that includes:

(a) The number and location of projects funded.

(b) The number of homes or communities receiving defensible space or home hardening support.

(c) The number of evacuation plans or preparedness training completed.

(d) Metrics on vegetation reduction and acres treated.

(e) The Department must publish an annual public report and maintain a publicly accessible online dashboard summarizing which projects were funded and what the results were.

(f) By January 1 ,2029 the Department must send the Legislature a final report on how well the program worked, along with recommendations whether it should be extended or expand the program.