

## JUNE 2025

### TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

#### **CNRA and CalEPA Continue Fast-tracking Projects as Part of Governor's**

**Emergency Proclamation on Wildfire:** The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), and CAL FIRE have launched a [dashboard showing the status of wildfire safety projects that have been approved for fast-tracking](#) under the Governor's March 1, 2025 [Emergency Proclamation on wildfire](#). As of June 30, the CNRA and CalEPA Secretaries have approved 24 critical fuels reduction projects for suspension of certain State of California statutory and regulatory requirements. The dashboard provides details on individual projects and is one of several resources available on a [Task Force webpage](#) that includes eligibility criteria, requirements for environmental protections, FAQs, support resources, and the application link.

#### **Task Force Launches Online Resource for Applicants Seeking Technical**

**Assistance for Wildfire Projects:** The Task Force has added a new resource to assist applicants to the above-mentioned regulatory suspension process navigate their project planning and implementation needs. The [Task Force's interactive map](#) includes contacts at the county level for CAL FIRE, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, DOC's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife and others to contact to advise on development and implementation for landscape resilience and community wildfire protection projects.

#### **Task Force Meeting Updates:**

- **September 4-5 Regional Meeting in the Inland Empire:** The next regional meeting will be hosted by the Inland Empire Community Foundation and Inland Empire Resource Conservation District at the University of Redlands with a special reception at the [Sustainable University of Redlands Farm](#). Registration will open in early July.
- **June 6 Meeting Recap:** The [meeting](#) highlighted how regional partners are working to implement multi-benefit, multi-jurisdictional work and how funding agencies are preparing to deliver Prop 4 [\(Climate Bond\)](#) funding.

### STATE HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Governor Signs \$325B Budget with Negotiations on Wildfire & Forest Resilience Items Continuing into the Summer:**

On June 27, Governor Newsom [signed](#) the [Budget Act of 2025](#) which the California Legislature passed on June 13. It is expected that budget-related negotiations will continue into the summer with budget trailer bills voted on before the close of the legislative session on September 12. Specific [natural resource highlights](#) of this budget include:

- Approving the Cap and Invest May Revision Finance Letter with a \$1 billion fund shift in 2025-26 for CAL FIRE operations and the remaining Greenhouse Gas Reduction (GGRF) dollars to be appropriated later.
- Adopting intent language to fund shift future GGRF revenue to CAL FIRE baseline operations if a General Fund deficit exists, including: \$1.25 billion in 2026-27, \$500 million in 2027-28, and \$500 million in 2028-29. If a deficit does not exist, \$500 million in 2026-27 shall still be fund shifted.



- Deferring reauthorization of the State's Cap-and-Trade program to the summer, along with further allocations of funds derived from the program.
- \$12.5 million from the General Fund for a new community home hardening program consisting of \$9.5 million for the Wildfire County Coordinator Program and \$3 million for a new home hardening certification program under the Office of the State Fire Marshal.
- \$10 million from the General Fund, for incarcerated individuals who serve in the Conservation (Fire) Camp Program. This program provides a workforce for suppression and other conservation work.
- Transitioning 3,000 seasonal firefighter positions to permanent (year-round) positions, phased over three years.

#### **CAL FIRE Awards Forest Health and Research Grants and Opens Solicitation for Wildfire Prevention Grants:**

- **Nearly \$72 Million Awarded to Landscape-Scale Forest Health Projects:** CAL FIRE's [Forest Health Program](#) has awarded [\\$72 million](#) to 12 grants to local and regional partners carrying out projects on state, local, tribal, federal, and private lands. Funded projects will employ a wide array of forest management strategies, with goals of wildfire resilience, watershed protection, habitat conservation for endangered species, recovery of fire-scarred and drought-impacted forests, and the reintroduction of fire as a natural ecological process. Several of the funded projects also include community outreach and long-term strategic planning through the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP); three-fourths of the awarded projects will benefit disadvantaged or low-income communities.
- **\$5.9 Million Awarded to Support Cutting-Edge Scientific Research:** CAL FIRE's [Forest Health Research Program](#) has [awarded \\$5.9 million](#) to support 15 scientific research studies that are expected to increase our understanding of relatively understudied vegetation types like chaparral, mountain meadows, and oak woodlands; strengthen frameworks for evaluating costs and benefits of fuel treatment strategies; and expand cutting-edge tools for forest monitoring and prescribed fire planning.
- **Up to \$135 Million is Available for Wildfire Prevention Projects:** On June 25, CAL FIRE's [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#) [announced](#) the solicitation for projects in and near fire threatened communities to improve public health and safety. Project types include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education. The deadline for applications is August 6.

**SNC Launches New Wildfire and Forest Resilience Grant Program:** Expedited by the [Governor's Emergency Proclamation on wildfire](#), the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is accepting statements of interest for its [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program](#). Funded through Proposition 4 (Climate Bond), the grant program [will provide \\$10 million for multi-benefit projects](#) within the Sierra-Cascade region that will protect communities and promote landscape health and resilience. SNC has also [opened a solicitation](#) for their \$4.1 million [Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access grant program](#).



**CAL FIRE Launches JoinCALFIRE.com with Comprehensive Information on the Department's Career Paths:** This month [CAL FIRE launched](#) JoinCALFIRE.com which includes streamlined applications for both entry-level and advanced positions; detailed job requirements, training information, and career progression insights; a calendar of statewide job fairs and hiring events; and direct access to applications and recruiter information.

**Board of Forestry (BOF) Seeks to Help Wood Product and Bioenergy Businesses Navigate the CA Environmental Quality Act:** The BOF has published a [CEQA Handbook for Bioenergy and Wood Products Businesses](#) to help guide project developers, land use staff, local government leaders, and other interested parties through the CEQA process. The insights and strategies outlined in the handbook are especially relevant to bioenergy and wood products businesses using forest biomass and may also be beneficial for bioenergy projects using wood from other sectors and for forest fuel reduction projects.

**California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment Seeks Reviewers and Associate Editors:** [The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation](#) (LCI) in partnership with the California Natural Resources Agency, California Energy Commission, and California Strategic Growth Council are seeking reviewers and associate editors to participate in the review and editing process for the [California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment](#) (Fifth Assessment) research portfolio. The review and editing process will take place between August 2025 and April 2026, with timelines varying by report; honoraria is available. To apply, [fill out the Call for Reviewers and Associate Editors application](#) by July 7.

## FEDERAL UPDATES

**President Signs Executive Order to Consolidate Federal Wildfire Programs:** On June 12, the President signed an [Executive Order](#) (EO) that directs the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to consolidate their wildland fire programs. The EO also instructs the departments and all agencies represented by the National Interagency Fire Center to increase wildland firefighting capabilities at the state and local levels, including using artificial intelligence, data sharing, and mapping capabilities; and instructs the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to modify or rescind "Federal rules or policies that impede the use of appropriate, preventative prescribed fires."

**U.S. Forest Service Rescinds 2001 Roadless Rules:** On June 23, the U.S. Forest Service [announced](#) that the 2001 Roadless Rules has been rescinded. This will remove prohibitions on road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvest on nearly 59 million acres of the National Forest System, allowing for fire prevention and timber harvest.

**Federal Agencies Launch Seasonal Campaign Ahead of Heightened Wildfire Activity:** As the U.S. enters wildfire season, federal agencies are urging Americans to get "Smoke Ready" and take proactive steps to reduce health risks from smoke exposure. The Be Smoke Ready campaign, featured on [AirNow.gov](#), provides practical guidance for individuals, families, schools, and workplaces. The effort is led by the EPA and partners such as the USFS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



## PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

### The Foundation for California Community Colleges Hosts Climate Futures Webinar Series and Wins a Telly:

- The Foundation for California Community Colleges (FoundationCCC) and Community College Research Center is hosting a webinar series on "[Community Colleges and Climate Futures](#)." The series is exploring how students can prepare to contribute meaningfully to sustainable local economies and what role colleges can play in strengthening partnerships with businesses to foster climate adaptation. Webinars held February 25, April 8, and June 17 were recorded and are [available online](#) and [registration for the August 12](#) webinar is open. The series will culminate with the [Community College Climate Summit](#), September 29-30 in Anaheim.
- The FoundationCCC's "Resilient Careers in Forestry Campaign" [commercial](#) was a bronze award winner in the [2025 Telly Awards](#). In partnership with the FoundationCCC, [California Resilient Careers in Forestry](#) is leading a multifaceted communications effort designed to motivate individuals to pursue careers in forestry, wildland firefighting, and forest operations, and connect them to the training and education pathways best suited to their individual needs and career goals.

**CA Fire Science Consortium Releases Bilingual Wildfire Education Resource:** The California Fire Science Consortium has published a [new online resource](#) that highlights progress that the Consortium's Bilingual Wildfire Outreach Program has made on translating key documents, producing Spanish-language outreach materials, launching visual campaigns like the "Wildfire Word of the Week," and building tools to support more equitable dissemination of wildfire information. The webpage also presents data on current gaps in outreach efforts. The Consortium is seeking to bring attention to the critical role of bilingual communication in disaster resilience and offer solutions for more inclusive outreach moving forward.

**LCI Develops California Wood Product & Forest Industry Directory.** The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) and the Watershed Research and Training Center are developing the [California Forest Industry Directory](#) (CAFID), a centralized, public platform serving California's forest sector by helping to connect producers, service providers, and buyers across the wood products value chain. Once completed, it will be a dynamic, searchable database that helps users find providers by service type, location, material, or certification. Designed to support economic development, CAFID strengthens in-state market activity and helps new, small, or underrepresented businesses connect with buyers, partners, and processors.

## LEGISLATION WATCH

**AB 1 (Connolly) Residential property insurance: wildfire risk.** Would require the Department of Insurance, on or before January 1, 2030, and every 5 years thereafter, to consider whether or not to update its regulations to include additional building hardening measures for property-level mitigation efforts and communitywide wildfire mitigation programs. As part of this consideration, the bill would require the department to consult with specified agencies to identify additional building hardening measures to consider, as well as to develop and implement a public participation process during the evaluation.



**AB 66 (Tangipa) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: egress route projects: fire safety.** Would, until January 1, 2032, exempt from CEQA egress route projects undertaken by a public agency to improve emergency access to and evacuation from a subdivision without a secondary egress route if the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has recommended the creation of a secondary access to the subdivision and certain conditions are met. The bill would require the lead agency to hold a noticed public meeting to hear and respond to public comments before determining that a project is exempt.

**AB 261 (Quirk-Silva) Fire safety: fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal.** Would, as applied to both state responsibility areas and lands that are not state responsibility areas, authorize the State Fire Marshal, in periods between the State Fire Marshal's review of areas of the state for recommendations regarding an area's fire hazard severity zone, to confer with entities, including, but not limited to, public agencies, tribes, nonprofit organizations, project applicants, and members of the public, on actions that may impact the degree of fire hazard in an area or the area's recommended fire hazard severity zone designation. The bill would authorize the State Fire Marshal to provide a written response to an entity on actions that may impact the degree of fire hazard and would require this written response to be posted on the State Fire Marshal's internet website.

**AB 300 (Lackey) Fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal.** Would require the State Fire Marshall, at least once every 5 years, to review areas in the state identified as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones, and to review lands within state responsibility areas classified as fire hazard severity zones.

**AB 687 (Patterson) Forestry: timber operations: maintenance of timberlands for fuels reduction.** Would authorize up to 35 projects per year that are exclusively for noncommercial wildfire fuels reduction in timberland, less than 1,000 acres in size, and paid for in part or in whole with public funds, to prepare a timber harvesting plan to comply with CEQA.

**AB 706 (Aguar-Curry) Forest Organic Residue, Energy, and Safety Transformation and Wildfire Prevention Fund Act.** Would establish the Forest and Wildfire Prevention Fund in the State Treasury, and would continuously appropriate the fund to the Natural Resources Agency to reduce organic fuel sources that increase fire risk by providing funding for the fire fuel reduction procurement program, which the bill would also establish, to support sufficient procurement, transport, and beneficial use of forest biomass waste that reduces fuel for wildfires, as specified.

**AB 763 (Ward) Timber harvesting: streambed agreement: waste discharge requirements.** Existing law provides that an entity submitting a timber harvesting plan is deemed to have given notice to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) of a lake or stream alteration and specifies that DFW is not required to issue an agreement fewer than 60 days from the date the notification is complete. This bill would require DFW to issue an agreement within 5 working days of the approval of a timber harvesting plan by CAL FIRE.





**AB 846 (Connolly)/SB 375 (Grove) Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities.** Would authorize a local agency to submit to the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife a wildfire preparedness plan to conduct wildfire preparedness activities on land designated as a fire hazard severity zone, as defined, that minimizes impacts to wildlife and habitat for candidate, threatened, and endangered species and require DFW to notify the local agency within 90 days of receipt of the wildfire preparedness plan if an incidental take permit or other permit is needed, or if there are other considerations, exemptions, or streamlined pathways that the wildfire preparedness activities qualify.

**AB 900 (Papan) Environmental protection: 30x30 goals: land conservation: science-based management and stewardship.** Would require CNRA, as part of its 2027 annual report on progress made toward achieving the 30x30 goal, to update the Pathways to 30x30 Report, and for the update to include, among other things, recommendations to increase science-based management and stewardship of 30x30 lands, including innovative ways to reduce barriers and increase federal, state, and local support for science-based management and stewardship.

**AB 1227 (Ellis) CA Environmental Quality Act: exemption: wildfire prevention projects.** Would, on or before January 31, 2026, require CalEPA and CNRA to each report to the Legislature information on the implementation of the March 1, 2025, Emergency Proclamation on wildfire that suspends applicable state statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements that fall within the jurisdiction of boards, departments and offices within these agencies for expediting critical fuels reduction projects.

**AB 1455 (Bryan) California Environmental Quality Act: certified regulatory program: State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection: ember-resistant zone.** Would require the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to adopt regulations to implement defensible space requirements for an ember-resistant zone required within 5 feet of a structure in a state responsibility area and a very high fire hazard severity zone.

**AB 1456 (Bryan) CA Environmental Quality Act: California Vegetation Treatment Program.** Would require, on or before January 1, 2027, the Board of Forestry to update the CalVTP Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) to expand the area that is treatable landscape under the FPEIR to portions of the state suitable for vegetation treatment consistent with the FPEIR, regardless of fire suppression responsibility designation, and recognize cultural burning conducted pursuant to a specified law as a covered treatment activity. The bill would authorize a public agency to partner with a federally recognized California Native American tribe to conduct a project under the FPEIR in the agency's jurisdiction.

**ABX1 13 (Gonzalez) California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: scoping plan.** Would require the CARB to include greenhouse gas emissions from wildlands and forest fires in the scoping plan.



**SB 88 (Caballero) Air resources: carbon emissions: biomass.** Would require CARB, on or before January 1, 2027, to finalize the standardized system and historic baseline of GHG emissions from California's natural fire regime reflecting conditions before modern fire suppression. The bill would require CARB, on or before January 1, 2028, to adopt a method of quantification of the lifecycle emissions from alternative uses of forest and agricultural biomass residues. Would require CARB, on or before January 1, 2028, to assess the suitability of developing a carbon credit or offset protocol for beneficial carbon removal products, including, but not limited to, biochar that are generated from agricultural biomass resources or forest biomass resources for inclusion in the state board's compliance offset program.

**SB 326 (Becker) Wildfire safety: The California Wildfire Mitigation Strategic Planning Act.** Would require the deputy director of CAL FIRE's office of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation, on or before January 1, 2027, and every 3 years thereafter, to prepare a Wildfire Risk Mitigation Planning Framework sufficient to quantitatively evaluate wildfire risk mitigation actions, as provided. The bill would require the framework to allow for geospatial evaluation and comparison of wildfire risk mitigation actions sufficient to direct coordinated mitigation efforts and long-term collaborative mitigation planning. The bill would require the framework be submitted to the Legislature, the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety, and the Public Utilities Commission for review and consideration.

**SB 429 (Cortese) Wildfire Safety and Risk Mitigation Program.** Would establish the Wildfire Safety and Risk Mitigation Program to fund the development, demonstration, and deployment of a public wildfire catastrophe model, as defined, and to provide grant funding to one or more universities for eligible projects with specified criteria for the purpose of creating a research and educational center responsible for developing, demonstrating, and deploying a public wildfire catastrophe model that provides significant wildfire safety benefits to California communities and assists alignment of federal, state, and local wildfire risk reduction efforts.

**SB 581 (McGuire) Department of Forestry and Fire Protection: employment: firefighters.** Would require the Department of Human Resources, the State Personnel Board, and any other relevant state agency to transition the Firefighter I classification within CAL FIRE to a permanent firefighter employment classification.

**SB 629 (Durazo) Wildfires: fire hazard severity zones: defensible space, vegetation management, and fuel modification enforcement.** Would require the factors on which the State Fire Marshal bases the identification of fire severity zones include areas within the perimeter of a wildfire that burned 1,000 or more acres, destroyed more than 10 structures, or resulted in a fatality, and to include areas at risk for an urban conflagration that accounts for the potential for structures to serve as a fuel source that extends the ember cast outside of wildland areas.



**SB 653 (Cortese) Wildfire prevention: environmentally sensitive vegetation management.** Would define an environmentally sensitive vegetation management project to mean vegetation management that reduces catastrophic wildfire risk over the long term while supporting native wildlife and biodiversity. The bill would require an environmentally sensitive vegetation management project to prioritize specified practices, including, among other things, practices that follow the principles of integrated pest management.

## PRESS BOX

**Trump administration rescinds 'Roadless Rule' that protects 58 million acres of national forests.** [Los Angeles Times](#), June 23, 2025. \$

**Globalstar and Technosylva Support Global Wildfire Response and Firefighter Safety with Satellite-Powered Digital Solutions.** [GuruFocus News](#), June 19, 2025.

**Fighting Fire with Research: How a Scientist is Protecting People and Property from Wildfires.** [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#), June 16, 2025.

**California's 2025 wildfire season was already going to be dangerous. Trump has made it worse.** [Los Angeles Times](#), June 18, 2025. \$

**We set a big chunk of California wilderness on fire. You're welcome.** [Los Angeles Times](#), June 16, 2025. \$

**The Burn Boss: Lenya Quinn-Davidson is spearheading a UC-backed movement that empowers California citizens to fight fire with fire.** [California, Cal Alumni Association](#), June 11, 2025.

**'Where's the federal government?' Newsom calls on Trump administration to fund more wildfire prevention.** [San Francisco Chronicle](#), May 30, 2025. \$

**State recognizes possible impacts of fire maps on insurance rates.** [City News Service, Los Angeles](#), June 11, 2025.

**As US braces for 'significant' wildfires, Trump's agriculture secretary addresses Forest Service departures.** [Fox News](#), June 2, 2025.

**Prescribed fire boosts community safety & forest health.** [U.S. Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest](#), May 29, 2025.

## LATEST IN SCIENCE

**Effect of recent prescribed burning and land management on wildfire burn severity and smoke emissions in the western United States.** [AGU Advancing Earth and Space Sciences](#), June 26, 2025.

**Wildfires drive multi-year water quality degradation over the western United States,** Brucker, et al., [Nature](#), June 23, 2025.

**Contribution of large wildfire events and burn severity classes to air pollution in California in 2018,** Bekker, et al., [ACS ES&T Air](#), June 18, 2025.

**Increasing boreal fires reduce future global warming and sea ice loss**





of Washington, Blanchard-Wigglesworth, et al., [Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences of the U.S.](#), June 10, 2025.

**Practitioner perspectives on assisted migration and adapting reforestation for climate change in the western U.S.**, Agne & Slesak. [Journal of Forestry](#), April 28, 2025.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**California Fire Foundation Statewide Grant Opportunity:** The [2025 statewide grant application](#) is open for California-based fire departments, local firefighter associations, federally recognized tribes, and nonprofit community organizations. Eligible activities for funding include: Vegetation Mitigation & Fuels Reduction; Education, Planning, and/or Community Outreach Campaigns; Personal Protective Equipment or Specialized Firefighting Equipment. Application deadlines is June 30, 2025.

**The USDA Timber Production Expansion Guaranteed Loan Program:** [This program](#) provides loan guarantees to establish, reopen, expand, or improve sawmills and other wood-processing facilities. Rolling application until funds depleted.

**Forest Business Alliance Grant Management Workshop.** The [Forest Business Alliance](#) (FBA) will offer a virtual Grant Management Workshop on Wednesday, July 23, 11am - noon. Topics covered include financial management and reporting, programmatic reporting, and general grant administration. The workshop will feature practical and applied information and advice on how to run grants and meet funding requirements. [Registration is required](#). Past workshop recordings are available on the [FBA YouTube channel](#).

**SNC's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program:** The [Program](#) is focused on protecting people and communities while achieving a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits. Proposals will be accepted and reviewed on a continuous basis until January 31, 2026, or as long as funding is available.

**WCB Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program:** [This program](#) funds projects that provide climate adaptation and resilience on California's natural and working lands. [Rolling application](#).

**The Headwaters Economics Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire:** This [technical assistance program](#) provides support for communities to reduce wildfire risks through improved land-use planning, compelling communication, and applied research. [Rolling application](#).

**Wetlands and Mountain Meadows Restoration:** [This program](#) provides funding for projects that restore or enhance wetlands and watershed ecosystems and provide co-benefits, consistent with the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy and Pathways to 30x30. [Rolling Application](#).



## LOOKING AHEAD

**Task Force 2025 Meeting Dates:** The Task Force [2025 meeting dates](#) include:

- September 4-5: Inland Empire Regional Meeting – University of Redlands
- December 12: Sacramento, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**June 10 – October 2025: UCANR Forest Stewardship Workshop Series:** This [workshop series](#) will help landowners develop plans to improve and protect their forestlands in an ecologically and economically sustainable manner. The workshops will address management objectives and planning, forest restoration, fuels reduction, project development, permitting, and cost-share opportunities. Participants will connect with other landowners and learn how to collect information to develop their own management plans.

**July 24-25, 2025: SCALE – Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement Project:** SCALE members will [convene](#) with representatives from agencies and collaborative groups at the North Tahoe Event Center to continue to share information and provide a voice for community-based collaboratives in landscape-scale restoration work.

**August 14-15, 2025. 30x30 Partnership 2025 Summit:** Celebrating the halfway point to 30x30 and how to focus to achieve that goal. The themes of sustain, strengthen, and succeed will be the launching point for engaging presentations, rich discussion, and time with colleagues to connect and learn about how 30x30 is being made real across California. [Register to attend](#) the Summit August 14 at the San Diego Natural History Museum and/or a field trip on August 15.

**November 18-20, 2025: CARCD 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference:** [Register](#) for this year's conference to be held at the DoubleTree Hilton in Sacramento. CARCD is also [soliciting proposals](#), with preference given to aimed specifically at RCDs and those that are interactive and engaging.

