



SB-470 Water: Urban Water Community Drought Relief program: Small Community Drought Relief prog

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL**NO. 470****Introduced by Senator Alvarado-Gil****February 13, 2023**

An act to ~~amend Section 13198.8 of, and to~~ add Sections 13198.5 and 13198.51 ~~to, to~~ the Water Code, relating to water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 470, as amended, Alvarado-Gil. Water: Urban Water Community Drought Relief program: Small Community Drought Relief program: high fire hazard and very high fire hazard severity zones.

Existing law requires the State Fire Marshal to identify areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent statewide criteria and based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas. Existing law requires a local agency to designate, by ordinance, moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones in its jurisdiction within 120 days of receiving recommendations from the State Fire Marshal, as provided.

Existing law authorizes specified state agencies, including the Department of Water Resources, subject to an appropriation, to make grants and direct expenditures for interim or immediate relief in response to conditions arising from a drought scenario to address immediate impacts on human health and safety or on fish and wildlife resources or to provide water to persons or communities that lose or are threatened with the loss of water supplies. ~~Existing law repeals this authorization on January 1, 2024.~~

This bill would ~~extend the authorization to January 1, 2026. The bill would, until January 1, 2026,~~ establish in the department the Urban Water Community Drought Relief program and the Small Community Drought Relief program to provide grants for similar interim or immediate drought relief. These programs, upon a specified appropriation, would authorize funding for benefits in addition to drought relief, ~~including~~ *including, among other projects,* projects that reduce the risk of wildfire for entire neighborhoods and communities through water delivery system improvements for fire suppression purposes in high fire hazard severity zone communities or very high fire hazard severity zone communities, as designated by the State Fire Marshal or by a local agency.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) California's rural landscapes and communities have been ground zero for large-scale environmental and economic devastation during the past decades by virtue of the Angora, Caldor, Camp, August Complex, and Dixie Fires.

(b) Aging infrastructures combined with insufficient resources to prepare for adequate wildfire response has left many rural communities at high risk for future unchecked fire activity.

(c) Postfire costs associated with the destruction inflicted upon communities, such as Grizzly Flats, Paradise, and Greenville, have been in the tens of billions of dollars.

(d) Congress has taken affirmative fiscal action by budgeting for funding last year and is poised to repeat that action this year as witnessed in House Report 117-400 to invest in fire prevention activities in the Tahoe Basin and elsewhere through projects such as water delivery system improvements for expanded water flow and fire hydrant installation.

(e) While California is taking the necessary actions to mitigate the intensity and frequency of fire in the rural parts of the state, local governments need state support for necessary investments to prepare for fire.

SEC. 2. Section 13198.5 is added to the Water Code, to read:

13198.5. (a) There is hereby established in the department the Urban Water Community Drought Relief program to provide grants for interim or immediate drought relief *to secure the future of California's water supply* to address immediate impacts on human health and ~~safety and on safety, to protect~~ fish and wildlife ~~resources resources~~, and to provide water to ~~persons or small or rural~~ *urban* communities that lose or are threatened with the loss or contamination of water supplies.

(b) A project funded by this program shall benefit a community supplied by an urban water supplier as defined in Section 10617.

(c) The program, upon appropriation for these purposes after the operative date of this section, may fund projects that provide benefits in addition to drought relief, ~~including projects~~ *including, but not limited to, all of the following projects:*

(1) Projects that reduce the risk of wildfire for entire neighborhoods and communities through water delivery system improvements for fire suppression purposes in high fire hazard severity zone communities or very high fire hazard severity zone communities, as designated by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to Article 9 (commencing with Section 4201) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code or by a local agency pursuant to Chapter 6.8 (commencing with Section 51175) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of the Government Code.

(2) Projects that provide water deliveries such as hauled water, temporary community water tanks, bottled water, or water vending machines.

(3) Projects that construct infrastructure such as emergency water interties, drilling or rehabilitating new wells, or the installation of permanent water infrastructure.

(4) Projects that rescue, protect, and relocate fish and wildlife.

(5) Projects that support water conservation activities, including, but not limited to, education, fixture replacement incentives and rebate programs, and turf replacement with drought tolerant landscaping.

SEC. 3. Section 13198.51 is added to the Water Code, to read:

13198.51. (a) There is hereby established in the department the Small Community Drought Relief program to provide grants for interim or immediate drought relief to address ~~immediate~~ impacts on human health and ~~safety and on safety and impacts on~~ fish and wildlife ~~resources resources~~, and to provide water to persons or small or rural communities that lose or are threatened with the loss or contamination of water supplies.

(b) A project funded by this program shall benefit a community not supplied by an urban water supplier as defined in Section 10617.

(c) The program, upon appropriation for its purposes after the operative date of this section, may fund projects that provide benefits in addition to drought relief, ~~including projects~~ *including, but not limited to, all of the following projects:*

(1) Projects that reduce the risk of wildfire for entire neighborhoods and communities through water delivery system improvements for fire suppression purposes in high fire hazard severity zone communities or very high fire hazard severity zone communities, as designated by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to Article 9 (commencing with Section 4201) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code or by a local agency pursuant to Chapter 6.8 (commencing with Section 51175) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of the Government Code.

(2) Projects that provide water deliveries such as hauled water, temporary community water tanks, bottled water, or water vending machines.

(3) Projects that construct infrastructure such as emergency water interties, drilling or rehabilitating new wells, or the installation of permanent water infrastructure.

(4) Projects that rescue, protect, and relocate fish and wildlife.

~~SEC. 4. Section 13198.8 of the Water Code is amended to read:~~

~~13198.8. This article shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2026, and as of that date is repealed.~~

~~SEC. 5.~~ **SEC. 4.** It is the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation that would, in the event appropriations are made for the programs described in subdivision (f) of Section 19.55 of the Budget Act of 2021, ensure funding eligibility for projects that reduce the risk of wildfire for entire neighborhoods and communities through water delivery system improvements for fire suppression purposes in high fire hazard severity zone communities or very high fire hazard severity zone communities, as designated by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to Article 9 (commencing with Section 4201) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code or by a local agency pursuant to Chapter 6.8 (commencing with Section 51175) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of the Government Code.