
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

AB 697 (Chau) - Forest resources: national forest lands: Good Neighbor Authority Fund: ecological restoration and fire resiliency projects

Version: July 15, 2021

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 26, 2021

Policy Vote: N.R. & W. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Ashley Ames

Bill Summary: This bill would substantially revise the existing Good Neighbor Authority Fund chapter in state law by requiring the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to establish a program for conducting ecological restoration and fire resiliency projects on forestlands under an agreement between the state and federal governments, among other things.

***** **ANALYSIS ADDENDUM – SUSPENSE FILE** *****

**The following information is revised to reflect amendments
adopted by the committee on August 26, 2021**

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown but potentially significant cost pressure (General Fund or special fund) to fund projects under the Good Neighbor Authority Program, which this bill would establish.
- To the extent the bill encourages forest treatment activities that reduce the occurrence of catastrophic wildfires from what otherwise would have occurred, this bill would result in potentially significant savings due to avoided fire suppression and other costs (General Fund).

Author Amendments: Proposed amendments would clarify that both community fire protection projects and landscape-scale ecological restoration projects are emphasized, and make other technical changes. Specifically, these amendments would:

1. Prioritize forest restoration and fuels reduction projects that are landscape scale and are focused on ecological restoration as well as protection of water and other infrastructure.
 - a. Prioritize projects with multiple benefits as applicable and feasible.
2. Specify that projects shall be based on the best available science and shall emphasize the use of prescribed fire where appropriate.
3. Add activities necessary to carry out authorized restoration services pursuant to an agreement to eligible program activities.
4. Make other technical changes.

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