
VETO

Bill No: SB 804
Author: Glazer (D)
Amended: 5/20/21
Vote: 27

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 8-0, 4/13/21
AYES: Laird, Jones, Allen, Eggman, Grove, Hertzberg, Hueso, Stern
NO VOTE RECORDED: Limón

SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 5-0, 4/27/21
AYES: Bradford, Ochoa Bogh, Kamlager, Skinner, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 5/20/21
AYES: Portantino, Bates, Bradford, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Wieckowski

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0, 6/2/21
AYES: Allen, Archuleta, Atkins, Bates, Becker, Borgeas, Bradford, Caballero, Cortese, Dahle, Dodd, Durazo, Eggman, Glazer, Gonzalez, Grove, Hertzberg, Hueso, Hurtado, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Leyva, Limón, McGuire, Min, Newman, Ochoa Bogh, Pan, Portantino, Roth, Rubio, Skinner, Stern, Umberg, Wieckowski, Wiener, Wilk
NO VOTE RECORDED: Melendez, Nielsen

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 9/2/21 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: California Conservation Corps: forestry training center

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Conservation Corps director, in partnership with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, to establish a forestry training center in northern California for formerly incarcerated individuals.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law

- 1) Establishes the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) in the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to oversee and administer programs related to forest health and fire prevention and response.
- 2) Establishes the California Conservation Camp Program to provide for training and use of wards and inmates assigned to conservation camps to perform public conservation projects including forest fire prevention and control, forest and watershed management, recreation, fish and game management, soil conservation, and forest and watershed revegetation.
- 3) Establishes the California Conservation Corps (CCC) in CNRA to administer the state's conservation corps program.
- 4) Requires the CCC director to establish a Forestry Corps Program to:
 - a) Develop and implement forest health projects.
 - b) Establish forestry corps crews.
 - c) Help corps members obtain forestry and forest technician degrees and certificates.
 - d) Train corps members to operate forestry equipment.
 - e) Create pathways from the corps to degree programs and jobs.
- 5) Authorizes the CCC director, in recruiting and enrolling corps members and special corps members, to select applicants who are on probation, parole, post release community supervision, or mandatory supervision.
- 6) Authorizes the CCC director to establish the Education and Employment Reentry Program to enroll formerly incarcerated individuals who successfully served on a Conservation Camp program crew, among other requirements, as program participants. The program's objectives include:
 - a) Developing, partnering with, and creating opportunities for the forestry corps program objectives.
 - b) Collaborating with the Employment development Department to provide access to workforce services.

- c) Collaborating with nongovernmental organizations dedicated to providing access to counseling, mentorship, supportive housing, health care, and educational opportunities.
 - d) Employing collaborations and partnerships available to the CCC.
- 7) Requires the CCC to submit an annual report to the Legislature on specified education and employment outcomes of corps members following their participation in the CCC.

This bill requires, upon an appropriation, the CCC director to establish a forestry training center in northern California in partnership with CalFire and CDCR on or before December 31, 2023. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the training center to provide enhanced training, education, work experience, and job readiness for entry-level forestry and vegetation management jobs.
- 2) Requires the training center to focus on forestry, and include counseling, mentorship, supportive housing, health care, and educational services.
- 3) Provides that the training center may include modules on specified activities, including natural resources or land management projects; fuels reduction and vegetation management projects; proactively restoring forest health to reduce greenhouse gases; among others.
- 4) Requires the CCC director to enroll formerly incarcerated individuals at the training center and to prioritize enrollment for those formerly incarcerated individuals who have done either of the following:
 - a) Successfully served on a CCC program crew and were recommended by the Director of CalFire and the Secretary of CDCR. The director or secretary of may designate a person from the respective department to make this recommendation.
 - b) Successfully served on a firefighting crew at the county level and were recommended for participation by county probation and county fire departments.
- 5) Authorizes the CCC director to enroll corpsmembers and local community conservation corpsmembers at the training center if funding and resources allow.

- 6) Provides that successful completion of a training program at the training center constitutes qualifying experience for an entry-level forestry or vegetation management position at a state agency.
- 7) Requires CCC, beginning December 31, 2023, to include in its annual report to the Legislature, a reporting of the education and employment outcomes of formerly incarcerated individuals enrolled in corps programs or centers established to serve formerly incarcerated individuals, as specified.

Background

Ventura Training Center. CalFire, CCC, and CDCR created a firefighter training and certification program at the Ventura Training Center (VTC) in Camarillo. Trainees are people on parole who participated in the Conservation Camp Program. VTC provides firefighter training, certifications and job readiness support to create a pathway for formerly incarcerated individuals to compete for entry-level firefighting jobs with state, federal and local agencies. VTC participants are trained and available to assist in fire suppression, emergency incident response and to perform fire prevention and resource management work. Onsite counselors help participants to develop skills to successfully reintegrate into the community. Services include employment skill assessments, money management, technology training, tutoring, career planning, and searching and applying for jobs.

A maximum of 80 cadets are housed at VTC at any one time. The program enrolled 21 cadets in the first year and 45 in the second year. The average age was 32-34. The CCC and its VTC partners have not released outcomes data, yet, for this program.

Comments

Is this bill necessary? The CCC has broad authority to enroll formerly incarcerated people as regular corps members or as program participants under the Education and Employment Reentry Program. The latter program includes a forestry focus, among others, and has not yet been funded. The CCC uses its broad authority to provide workforce development and education services to formerly incarcerated individuals at the VTC and is exploring other opportunities to create training centers for this population in other areas of the state.

This bill provides specific legislative direction to establish a center for forestry and vegetation management pathways by a specified deadline, assuming it is funded, in northern California. If passed, it would indicate the Legislature's priorities for where to establish new training centers and for which fields.

There is certainly a great need to develop the workforce necessary to address California's forest and watershed health, catastrophic wildfire, biodiversity, climate change, and emergency response challenges. It is also necessary to do so in a way that (1) supports high roads job opportunities, and (2) increases equity by providing pathways and opportunities for marginalized populations, like formerly incarcerated individuals.

This bill is consistent with the Senate's Blueprint for a Fire Safe California. That document describes the Senate's 2021 priorities for addressing issues related to wildfire and includes an overarching priority to train and deploy a fire resiliency workforce. It provides specific direction to permanently expand the mission of the CCC to grow the pipeline to family sustaining careers in the fire service and related employment sectors. Focus areas include backfilling inmate fire crews and assisting with firefighting, post-fire ecological and watershed restoration, enhanced vegetation management, wildfire hazard mitigation, and defensible space and home hardening.

Legislature agrees to consider a center in the 2022-23 state. The Assembly Budget Committee's September 7, 2021 analysis packet for AB/SB 170 documented this commitment via the following Supplemental Reporting Language (SRL):

“Forestry Management Training Center. Includes SRL as follows: The Legislative Analyst's Office shall consult with CalFire and other appropriate stakeholders, including the California Conservation Corps, to develop options for the Legislature to consider for creating a forestry management training center in Northern California. It is the intent of the Legislature to consider approving the center during the budget process for the 2022-23 state budget.”

(<https://abgt.assembly.ca.gov/sites/abgt.assembly.ca.gov/files/Analyses%20Packet%20%20%2009.07.21%20%20updated.pdf>, see page 28).

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- CCC estimates one-time capital outlay costs of about \$65 million (General Fund or bond funds) to construct a new residential center.
- CCC estimates ongoing costs of approximately \$5.8 million (General Fund) annually to operate a new residential facility. The CCC notes that \$5.8 million is the cost to operate a typical residential center that supports 80 traditional corpsmembers.
- CDCR estimates ongoing costs of roughly \$2 million annually (General Fund), which is the cost for CDCR activities at the Ventura Training Center (VTC). CDCR notes that as the program is developed, its Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO) may identify additional fiscal impact, and that costs are still largely unknown and dependent on program size.
- Unknown costs, likely in the low millions of dollars annually (General Fund), for CalFire to support the new training center. CalFire stated that the department is not analyzing this bill and that no CalFire costs have been identified at this time. However, staff notes that the state budget provides CalFire with \$2 million annually (General Fund) to support the VTC, which is the model utilized for the training center in this bill. Staff believes that the costs of this bill for CalFire would be similar to that of its costs related to the VTC.
- Unknown, likely significant ongoing costs (General Fund) for CCC to meet the additional reporting requirements.

SUPPORT: (Verified 10/14/21)

American Forest Foundation
California Public Defenders Association
City of Orinda
East Bay Municipal Utility District
Humboldt Redwood Company LLC
Rubicon Programs

OPPOSITION: (Verified 10/14/21)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author:

“This legislation would create a center to train formerly incarcerated people in forestry management, thereby reducing the risk of deadly wildfires, while offering these qualified individuals a pathway to gainful employment. One way to reduce

the devastation of wildfires is to proactively engage in forestry and vegetation management, including brush clearing. One of the greatest obstacles to this practice, however, is a lack of a trained workforce. This bill seeks to fill that void by establishing a program where graduates would be eligible for an entry-level forestry positions throughout the state.”

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE:

This bill would direct the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to establish a forestry training center providing training in Northern California for entry-level forestry and vegetation management jobs and prioritizing the enrollment of former conservation camp crew members, in consultation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

As California continues to face unprecedented fire seasons, California has worked to expand our firefighting force. In 2020, I was proud to sign AB 2147 (Chapter 60, Statutes of 2020), which allowed for incarcerated individuals to serve as firefighters following their release. Additionally, in October 2018, CDCR, in partnership with CAL FIRE and the CCC, began a Firefighter Training and Certification Camp in Ventura County. The pilot program was established to expand employment opportunities for incarcerated individuals with the intention of preparing them for entry-level firefighting jobs following release.

I applaud the efforts laid out in this bill and encourage the author to work through the budget process to advance efforts related to the expansion of a Northern California center.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 9/2/21

AYES: Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bigelow, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Bryan, Burke, Calderon, Carrillo, Cervantes, Chau, Chen, Chiu, Choi, Cooley, Cooper, Cunningham, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Lorena Gonzalez, Gray, Grayson, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wood

NO VOTE RECORDED: Frazier, Low, Nguyen, Rendon

Prepared by: Catherine Baxter / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116
12/29/21 10:11:34

**** **END** ****