

Introduced by Senator Cogdill

February 23, 2007

An act to add Sections 4742 and 4743 to the Public Resources Code, relating to fire prevention and protection.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 838, as introduced, Cogdill. Fire prevention and protection.

Existing law contains legislative findings and declarations concerning wildland fire prevention and vegetation management. The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is required to assist local governments in preventing future wildland fire and vegetation management problems by making its wildland fire prevention and vegetation management expertise available to local governments to the extent possible within the department's budgetary limitations.

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations concerning wildfire threats in the state and the California Fire Safe Council. The bill would provide that the Legislature intends to establish a cost-share, community-based wildfire threat reduction and prevention program administered by the California Fire Safe Council in conjunction with the department, to assist in implementing specified wildfire threat reduction programs.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 4742 is added to the Public Resources
- 2 Code, to read:
- 3 4742. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

1 (a) California wildfires have garnered broad public attention
2 due to the severity and expanse of the areas consumed by those
3 wildfires.

4 (b) The state has a compelling interest in reducing the threats
5 of wildfires, including threats to lives, property, and natural
6 resources.

7 (c) The state’s increasing population and the threat of
8 catastrophic wildfires will affect vast acreage of natural forestland,
9 wildland urban interface, homes, and public safety.

10 (d) Wildfire threats present a challenge for addressing climate
11 change reduction efforts, since any potential benefit of forests to
12 reduce carbon emissions will be lost as a result of wildfires.

13 (e) Federal funds have been the primary funding source for the
14 California Fire Safe Council, which is one of the state’s leading
15 community-based wildfire preparedness organizations.

16 (f) The California Fire Safe Council includes a statewide
17 network of local fire councils that help with hazard mitigation,
18 wildfire safety planning, and educational programs.

19 (g) Although federal funds have been the primary funding source
20 of the California Fire Safe Council, these funds are woefully
21 inadequate and too unstable to meet the state’s increasing needs.

22 (h) Because wildfire has become a significant threat to the state’s
23 environmental health and public safety, more efforts are needed
24 at the state level to address fire prevention and reduction.

25 SEC. 2. Section 4743 is added to the Public Resources Code,
26 to read:

27 4743. The Legislature intends to establish a cost-share,
28 community-based wildfire threat reduction and prevention program
29 administered by the California Fire Safe Council in conjunction
30 with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, to assist in
31 implementing the following wildfire threat reduction programs:

- 32 (a) Fire safe council prevention and fuel reduction projects.
- 33 (b) California Fire Safe Council and Clearinghouse.
- 34 (c) Fire safe council coordinators and operating costs.
- 35 (d) Fire safe educational programs.
- 36 (e) Department of Forestry and Fire Protection community fire
37 prevention specialists.