

---

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**Senator Allen, Chair**

**2021 - 2022 Regular**

---

**Bill No:** SB 1123  
**Author:** Caballero  
**Version:** 3/16/2022  
**Urgency:** No  
**Consultant:** Jacob O'Connor

**Hearing Date:** 4/27/2022  
**Fiscal:** Yes

**SUBJECT:** Resilience Navigators Program: climate-related disaster resilience grant and loan programs

**DIGEST:** Requires the Office of Planning and Research to develop the Resilience Navigators Program to provide support and guidance to potential applicants for state programs that offer financial assistance related to enhancing resilience to climate change, including disasters associated with or amplified by climate change.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to serve the Governor as staff for long-range planning and research including management of state planning grants and coordination of federal grants for environmental goals. (Government Code (GOV) §65040)
- 2) Establishes within OPR the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program (ICARP) to develop a cohesive and coordinated response to the impacts of climate change across the state. The program includes the State Adaptation Clearinghouse which serves as a centralized source of information and resources for planning and implementing climate adaptation projects. (Public Resources Code (PRC) §71350-71360)
- 3) Establishes the Regional Climate Collaborative Program under the administration of the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to assist under-resourced communities within a region to access state funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects through assistance from selected regional climate collaborative. (PRC 71130-7§1132)
- 4) Requires the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to update its climate adaptation strategy, the Safeguarding California Plan, by July 1, 2017, and every three years thereafter, by coordinating adaptation activities among lead state agencies in each sector. (PRC §71153)

- 5) Requires the California State Library to create a funding opportunities website that provides a centralized location for grant seekers to find state grant opportunities. (Government Code §8333.1)

This bill:

- 1) Requires OPR, by July 1, 2023, to establish, within ICARP, the Resilience Navigators Program to provide information and guidance to potential applicants for state programs that offer financial assistance related to enhancing resilience to climate change, including disasters associated with or amplified by climate change.
- 2) Requires OPR, as part of the Resilience Navigators Program, to:
  - a) Develop, maintain, and update an interactive resource on its website, or on a related state-administered website, of all state and federal (as identified by OPR's Federal Grant Administrator) climate-resilience related programs and information on the offices that administer them and the application process;
  - b) Provide information and guidance to entities seeking to apply for assistance from these programs, including matching potential applicants with appropriate programs, connecting potential applicants with technical assistance providers, and facilitating communication and coordination between potential applicants and the administering agencies; and
  - c) Conduct outreach to vulnerable communities, as defined by ICARP, to inform them of the availability of financial assistance from these programs.
- 3) Requires CNRA, in coordination with SGC, the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), and other relevant state entities to develop:
  - a) An interactive website that displays the state's climate adaptation strategy including its priorities, goals, actions, metrics, timeframes, and lead agencies. The website shall be updated no less than annually with information on programs, projects, and plans that the state has funded that support implementation of the strategy; and
  - b) Coordinated, science-based approaches for measuring the performance and outcomes of state investments that support implementation of the state's climate adaptation strategy which CNRA shall use to measure and post the performance and outcomes of investments on the interactive website.

## Background

- 1) *Climate-related disasters are increasingly common.* According to the United Nation’s World Meteorological Association, climate change helped drive and increase the number of weather, climate or water hazard disasters by 500% over the last 50 years. As the planet continues to warm this effect will worsen and extreme weather events such as extreme heat, floods, and droughts will become more common and severe. The CNRA’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment estimates that by 2050 the state may have over \$100 billion of annual costs associated with climate change.
- 2) *Adaptation plays a key role in reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate change.* According to Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), progress on adaptation planning and implementation has been observed across all sectors and regions, generating multiple benefits. However adaptation progress is unevenly distributed, creating gaps between current levels of adaptation and levels needed to respond to impacts and reduce climate risks. Further, many initiatives prioritize immediate and near-term climate risk reduction which reduces the opportunity for transformational adaptation.

Adaptation is especially important for vulnerable communities, which are expected to suffer disproportionately from problems caused by a changing climate. While affluent individuals have resources to shield themselves from some of climate change’s impacts, many impoverished communities face threats that are intensified by climate change. For example, they frequently live in areas already vulnerable to pollution and natural disasters, yet may lack insurance and other economic means to recover from health problems or disasters.

In 2018, ICARP published a resource guide called *Defining Vulnerable Communities in the Context of Climate Adaptation*, which defined the term “vulnerable community” to mean communities that experience heightened risk and increased sensitivity to climate change and that have less capacity and fewer resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from climate impacts. These disproportionate effects are caused by physical (built and environmental), social, political, and/or economic factor(s), which are exacerbated by climate impacts. These factors include race, class, sexual orientation and identification, national origin, and income inequality.

- 3) *California has responded to climate change by making new investments to provide relief and promote resiliency.* In 2021, the Legislature and Governor

authorized \$15 billion over three years to fund climate related projects including:

- a) A \$3.7 billion climate resilience commitment, including funding to address extreme heat, build community resilience, and address sea level rise;
- b) A 3-year, \$5.2 billion water and drought resilience commitment including funding for addressing water security and flood risk, emergency drought relief projects, and nature-based solutions; and
- c) A \$1.5 billion wildfire and forest resilience commitment including funding for home hardening and defensible space, wildfire fuel breaks, fuel reduction projects and local fire prevention grants.

The allocated funding will be spread out among projects and grant funds in many different agencies including, SGC, CNRA, CDFR, and CalEPA.

- 4) *OPR's Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program*. ICARP was established by SB 246 (Wieckowski, 2015). The program is charged with developing a coordinated response to the impacts of climate change across the state. The program is comprised of the State Adaptation Clearinghouse (SAC) and the Technical Advisory Council (TAC).

The TAC brings together local governments, practitioners, scientists, and community leaders to help coordinate activities that prepare California for the impacts of climate change. It has developed a resource guide for local governments to actuate a definition for vulnerable communities for environmental justice and climate adaptation actions and released an adaptation finance guide for local governments.

The SAC serves as a centralized source of information and resources to assist decision makers when planning for and implementing climate adaptation and resiliency projects. It is an online database searchable by topic, agency, or region that contains such resources as adaptation planning guides for local governments, case studies of adaptation projects from local entities, state agency resources on various topics, and public data tools for understanding the future impacts of climate change.

- 5) *Evaluating climate resilience funding*. Climate resilience refers to building the capacity to cope with the disasters and hazards brought about by climate change. Because the effects of climate change are so varied climate resiliency projects are very diverse, addressing topics like home hardening and forest management for mitigating the effects of wildfires, preparing energy grids to cope with heat waves, and coastal adaptation projects to prepare for rising sea

levels. Unlike climate change mitigation, which can largely be evaluated in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions there is no one universal metric for evaluating resiliency.

In 2018, Californian voters passed a general obligation bond relating to drought, water, parks, climate, coastal protection, and outdoor access for all program. As part of administering the funds from this bond CNRA developed a method for publicly reporting on their website the objective, timeline, costs, and progress of all projects funded by the bond. CNRA needed to allow the flexibility for projects to define their own objectives because of the diversity of projects funded.

## Comments

- 1) *Purpose of Bill.* According to the author, “Climate change continues to threaten California’s communities with devastating wildfires, extreme heat, floods, droughts, and sea level rise. Communities need additional resources and capacity to plan for and address these risks holistically, and last year’s budget provided for existing and new programs across a number of departments and agencies, including the Office of Planning and Research, the Strategic Growth Council, the Department of Food and Agriculture, the Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, among others. Each of these programs addresses specific community or regional resilience needs.

“To ensure the continued success of the State’s efforts towards climate resilience, it is critical that the programs remain accessible, coordinated, transparent and accountable to measures of success. To improve access to a variety of climate resilience programs, SB 1123 directs the Office of Planning and Research, through the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program, to develop a web-based resource to identify all state-funded resilience funding programs, and to provide direct support to communities and other entities seeking state funding, which will include targeted outreach to underresourced communities. The bill also requires the implementing agencies to develop a coordinated approach for communicating where and how these collective funds are being spent, as well as coordinated approaches for measuring success in climate resilience against measures adapted from existing state strategies.”

- 2) *Communities need help navigating multiple funding programs.* Communities seeking climate resilience often need funding for a variety of related projects addressing multiple risks. For example a community dealing with increasing occurrence of wildfires may need to apply for funding for home hardening, for

installation of air conditioning units, for air filtration, for forest management, and for microgrid development, but these programs are not administered by the same agencies. A single centralized body to govern climate resiliency is impractical because of the large diversity of programs that are necessary to respond to the myriad impacts the changing climate has. But this diversity of programs makes it difficult for communities to identify opportunities and parse related application processes across state agencies. This bill will help address this problem by tasking ICARP with centralizing climate resiliency related programs at a single interactive resource and to help connect communities with technical assistance to navigate these funding programs.

- 3) *Transparency and evaluation of mitigation efforts is complicated but important.* Because climate change mitigation requires so many different actions a single metric to evaluate success is not practical. This can make evaluating the efficacy of state investments difficult. However, methods for evaluating the progress of resilience projects towards their goals have been established by CNRA and interactive dashboards for sharing this kind of information have been developed for the California Climate Investments. By directing agencies to work with CNRA to develop reporting standards this bill will improve transparency and help state agencies share expertise in evaluating resiliency programs.
- 4) *The list of agencies involved in developing the interactive website may be too narrow.* While this bill does highlight several agencies where new investments in resiliency have been made, it leaves out certain other key agencies that should be included such as the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the California State Transportation Agency. ***The committee may wish to amend the bill to direct CNRA to coordinate with ICARP and state entities represented in the California Climate Adaptation Strategy when developing reporting and evaluation tools for climate resiliency programs.***
- 5) *Committee amendments. Staff recommends the committee adopt the bolded amendments contained in comment 4 above.*

### **Related/Prior Legislation**

AB 2076/AB 585 (Luz Rivas) would establish the Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program under ICARP to coordinate state efforts and support local and regional efforts to prevent or mitigate the impacts of and reduce the public health risks of heat. The first is awaiting hearing in the Assembly Committee on Health; the second was held on the suspense file in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 1384 (Gabriel) would expand requirements for the state's climate adaptation strategy, including to require CNRA to coordinate with OPR on the strategy, and to create metrics to measure and evaluate the state's progress in implementing the strategy. This bill is on the Inactive File on the Senate Floor.

SB 456 (Laird, Chapter 387, Statutes of 2021) required the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force to develop a comprehensive implementation strategy to track and ensure the achievement of the goals and key actions identified in California's "Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan." This includes monitoring, tracking, and reporting treatments, and progress made in achieving the goals and key actions.

AB 9 (Wood, Chapter 225, Statutes of 2021) established the Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program under the State Fire Marshall to coordinate regional and local efforts with state policies, strategies, and programs for community wildfire mitigation.

SB 1072 (Leyva, Chapter 377, Statutes of 2018) established a regional climate collaborative program under SGC to assist under-resourced communities within a region to access statewide public and other grant moneys.

AB 2252 (Limón, Chapter 318, Statutes of 2018) required the California State Library to create a funding opportunities web portal that provides a centralized location for grant seekers to find state grant opportunities. It must provide information identifying every grant administered by the state and any incentive opportunities allocated by statute or in the annual budget that will provide local assistance funds.

AB 1348 (Irwin, Chapter 444, Statutes of 2016) established the position of federal grant administrator within the State Clearinghouse, under OPR, to serve as the state's primary point of contact for information on federal grants, as specified.

**SOURCE:** State Controller's Office

**SUPPORT:**

California Association of Nonprofits

**OPPOSITION:**

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the California Association of Nonprofits, “CalNonprofits supports SB 1123 because it will provide California nonprofits, including in under-resourced and at-risk communities, with information to help them apply for and receive state grants to implement climate disaster resilience programs.”

**-- END --**