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EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT ON PENDING LEGISLATION

As of 09/25/2023

# Administration and Finance

## [SB 544, Laird, As Amended](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publishbillinfo.aspx?bi=u5LCNdmcZcnC0d%2BEgbdf35vwUBiVm0K%2FL87c%2BXYQes8CxA%2Br1kHS1At8bkt5BD9d)

***Status: Approved by the Governor***

# Existing law, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, requires, with specified exceptions, that all meetings of a state body be open and public and all persons be permitted to attend any meeting of a state body. The act authorizes meetings through teleconference subject to specified requirements, including, among others, that the state body post agendas at all teleconference locations, that each teleconference location be identified in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, that each teleconference location be accessible to the public, that the agenda provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the state body directly at each teleconference location, and that at least one member of the state body be physically present at the location specified in the notice of the meeting.

# This bill would enact an additional, alternative set of provisions under which a state body may hold a meeting by teleconference.

# Fire Protection/Fuel Management

## [AB 692, Patterson, As Introduced](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publishbillinfo.aspx?bi=42Lt88vMxaj5xM%2B5Itfn44NSKl%2F7pmWTMTBrFDr1%2FoLPp3FBwnPsX3AL%2B0pJ%2BEOf)

***Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee***

This bill would, until January 1, 2030, exempt from CEQA egress route projects undertaken by a public agency to improve emergency access to and evacuation from a subdivision without a secondary egress route if the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has recommended the creation of a secondary access to the subdivision and certain conditions are met.

[SB 504, Dodd, As Amended](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB504)

***Status: Assembly Committee on Natural Resources***

Existing law requires fuels to be maintained and spaced in a condition so that a wildfire burning under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure. A violation of these requirements is a crime.

This bill would instead require fuels to be maintained and spaced in a condition so that a wildfire would be unlikely to ignite the structure.

# Forestry

## [AB 66, Mathis, As Amended](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publishbillinfo.aspx?bi=doXdRpJk50l%2Fq%2BUZPFGZxBfuDu1VbFrgr4doUQlHVEkmziFqaA4ZvNWHM8jh1QdV)

***Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee***

Existing law establishes the Natural Resources Agency, composed of departments, boards, conservancies, and commissions responsible for the restoration, protection, and management of the state’s natural and cultural resources. Existing law establishes in the agency the Department of Water Resources, which manages and undertakes planning with regard to water resources in the state. This bill would require the agency, and each department, board, conservancy, and commission within the agency, to take all reasonable steps to approve the necessary permits for specified projects that meet certain employment conditions within 180 days from receiving a complete permit application. The bill would require the department, board, conservancy, or commission responsible for issuing a permit to post updates on its internet website for each permit application explaining how the permit approval process is progressing and the estimated time until the permit is approved.

[AB 1526, Committee on Natural Resources, As Amended](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1526)

***Status: Passed. Enrolled September 18, 2023, awaiting Governor’s signature***

The Z’berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 prohibits a person from conducting timber operations, as defined, unless a timber harvesting plan prepared by a registered professional forester has been submitted to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The act authorizes the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to exempt from some or all of those provisions of the act a person engaging in specified forest management activities, as prescribed, including the one-time conversion of less than three acres to a nontimber use, as specified.

This bill would authorize the Board to allow a waiver of the one-time limitation.

# Range Management Advisory Committee

## [SB 675,](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publishbillinfo.aspx?bi=2KLHt3hqEy1VKI4rVSmQpd0abeCEizPdETKhlUj5scTpmnHNbEnRXRJG2QARHWSj) [[Limón](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publishbillinfo.aspx?bi=2KLHt3hqEy1VKI4rVSmQpd0abeCEizPdETKhlUj5scTpmnHNbEnRXRJG2QARHWSj)](http://sd19.senate.ca.gov/)[, As Amended](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publishbillinfo.aspx?bi=2KLHt3hqEy1VKI4rVSmQpd0abeCEizPdETKhlUj5scTpmnHNbEnRXRJG2QARHWSj)

***Status: Inactive File***

Existing law requires the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to appoint a Range Management Advisory Committee and to consult with the advisory committee on rangeland resource issues under consideration by the board.

The bill would require, on or before July 1, 2024, the advisory committee, in consultation with specified entities, to develop guidance for local or regional prescribed grazing plans, as provided. The bill would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (department) and the Department of Conservation to consider and incorporate, where appropriate, this guidance in specified grant programs, as provided.

Existing law requires the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, established by former Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., to develop a comprehensive implementation strategy to track and ensure the achievement of the goals and key actions identified in the state’s “Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan,” as provided. Existing law requires, on or before January 1, 2026, and every 5 years thereafter, the task force to update the action plan.

This bill would require the task force, on or before June 30, 2025, in consultation with the advisory committee, to develop a strategic action plan to expand the use of prescribed grazing, as provided. The bill would require the task force to consider incorporating prescribed grazing in the January 1, 2026, update to the “Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.”

[AB 297, Fong, as Amended](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB297)

***Status: Enrolled, Awaiting Governor’s Signature***

Existing law requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to establish a local assistance grant program for fire prevention activities, defined to include grazing activities, and home hardening education activities. Under existing law, eligible grant activities include public education outreach activities, as provided. Under existing law, the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection may, until January 1, 2024, authorize advance payments from a grant program award, not to exceed 25% of the total grant award, except as specified.

This bill would change the definition of fire prevention activities to include prescribed grazing, as defined. The bill would expand allowable public education outreach activities to include training on prescribed grazing. The bill would also indefinitely extend the director’s authority to authorize advance payments from a grant program award, as provided, and conform a cross-reference to existing law.

# Forest Biomass [*AB 625, Aguiar-Curry, As Amended*](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB625)

***Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee***

This bill would establish the Forest Biomass Waste Utilization Program to be administered by the state board’s Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation to develop an implementation plan to meet the goals and recommendations of, and the comprehensive framework to align with the state’s wood utilization policies and priorities and focused market strategy of, specified statewide forest management plans, and to develop a workforce training program to complement the workforce needs associated with the implementation plan.