

SENATE BILL SB-42

Introduced by Senator Christopher Cabaldon (D-3)

An act relating to wildfire protection and insurance act.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-42, Christopher Cabaldon (D-3). wildfire protection and insurance act.

This bill would reduce wildfire damage and make homeowners insurance more affordable by creating a Wildfire Home Protection Program that provides financial assistance for homeowners to complete wildfire mitigation projects. The bill prioritizes high-risk areas, lower-income households, communities with a history of devastating wildfires, and properties near wildland and farmland areas. It also creates a Community Wildfire Protection Certificate for households that complete and maintain at least five qualifying mitigation projects, which would help them obtain fire insurance and qualify for reduced premiums.

Vote: 2/3rds. **Appropriations/fiscal:** yes. **Local program:** no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

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SECTION 1.

This act shall be known as the wildfire reduction and insurance affordability act

SECTION 2.

- a. *The department of forestry and fire protection, in coordination with the department of insurance, shall establish the wildfire home protection program.*
- b. *The funds for the wildfire home protection program will be \$1.5 million yearly.*
- c. *The program shall provide financial assistance to home owners for eligible projects, excluding roofing projects, that reduce the risk of wildfire damage to residential properties in the form of 0% interest loans up to 60% of the cost of 5 eligible wildfire mitigation projects.*
- d. *Loans from the wildfire home protection program will be paid back in a period of 6 years and returned to the fund.*
- e. *Eligible projects may include but are not limited too:*
 1. *Replacement of combustible roofing materials with a qualifying Class A roof.*
 2. *Installation or replacement of ember-resistant vents.*
 3. *Removal of combustible vegetation and other combustible materials within five feet of a structure.*
 4. *Creation and maintenance of defensible space.*
 5. *Replacement of combustible fencing immediately adjacent to a structure.*
 6. *Installation of fire-resistant exterior siding.*
 7. *Replacement of vulnerable windows with qualifying multi-pane or fire-resistant windows.*

8. Removal or modification of other structural features identified by the department as significant wildfire vulnerabilities.
- f. Priority for the program will be given to:
 1. Homes located in areas designated as having elevated or extreme fire risk.
 2. Low and moderate income households
 3. Communities with a documented history of devastating wildfires
 4. Properties located with or adjacent to wildland areas
 5. Projects that address multiple wildfire risks simultaneously
 6. Dwellings with and surrounding farm land

SECTION 3.

- g. The Department of Insurance shall establish a framework under which insurers must recognize verified wildfire mitigation when determining eligibility for insurance coverage and premiums.*
- h. Verification of wildfire mitigation projects will be administered by municipal or county governments with recertification every 5 years.*
- i. A household that completes qualifying wildfire mitigation projects will receive a community wildfire protection certificate from the state.*
- j. A household that qualifies for a community wildfire protection certificate will complete and maintain at least 5 projects to mitigate wildfire damage as described in section (2)e. With the exception that households with already existing wildfire mitigation features will count towards the 5 projects requirement.*
- k. A household that qualifies for a community wildfire protection certificate will be eligible to receive fire insurance from insurers and have reduced premiums from other households in their area by 30% in moderate risk Wildfire zones and 25% in high and very high risk wildfire zones.*