



Farm Bureau at work

California Farm Bureau's government affairs team is at the Capitol, advocating for farmers, ranchers and agriculture's future. Here are some key issues Farm Bureau is focused on this week.

November 17, 2023

✦ ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION (CAL FIRE)

\$170 MILLION AVAILABLE TO PROMOTE THRIVING FOREST ECOSYSTEMS

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is announcing the availability of up to \$120 million for Forest Health and \$50 million for Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration projects.

CAL FIRE is soliciting applications for projects that work to proactively prevent catastrophic wildfires and restore forests to healthy, functioning ecosystems while also sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Applications will be accepted from November 13, 2023, and will be due by no later than 3:00 PM on January 15, 2024. Click [here](#) to apply.

The Forest Health Program funds active restoration and reforestation activities aimed at providing for more resilient and sustained forests. This ensures the future existence of forests in California while also mitigating climate change, protecting communities from fire risk, strengthening rural economies, and improving California's water and air. A virtual pre-recorded workshop will be made available to explain the grant process and requirements. Please check the Forest Health webpage to view the workshop. Any questions can be directed to ForestHealth@fire.ca.gov.

Projects that receive funding from the Forest Health grant program are designed to complement the California Forest Carbon Plan, California's Natural and Working Lands Implementation Plan, California's Wildfire & Forest Resilience Action Plan, California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire, and AB 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan. The Forest Health grant program is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment— particularly in disadvantaged communities.

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHALL (OSFM)

APSA RULEMAKING

CAL FIRE-Office of the State Fire Marshall is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act (APSA) program element of the Unified Program. The APSA provides technical and enforcement guidance for aboveground petroleum storage to reduce the risk of leaks and spills. The OSFM has announced APSA rulemaking to update APSA regulations to current building and safety standards.

Copies of the Notice of Proposed Action, Text of Proposed Regulations, Initial Statement of Reasons (ISOR), documents Incorporated by Reference in the text of proposed regulations, documents relied upon, and any other materials concerning this rulemaking can be accessed on the Office of the State Fire Marshal website at:

<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/code-development-and-analysis/title-19-development/>

Public comments can be made in person at a hearing in January 2024:
The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
January 19, 2024
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

CAL FIRE
710 Riverpoint Court, Suite 150
Conference Room 101
West Sacramento, CA 95605

or on the day of the hearing, join virtually: [here](#)
Meeting ID: 240 154 319 261 Passcode: y2dfQe
Teleconference number- audio only
+1 650-564-3271
Phone Conference ID: 712 737 262#

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

As interest in “regenerative agriculture” continues to grow, we are seeing the introduction and evolution of the term in California policies and programs.

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture, as advisory body to the Governor and CDFA Secretary, is positioned to advise on how the State’s farmers, ranchers and consumers may be best served by agricultural policies in the state. Incorporating a definition of regenerative agriculture for state policies and programs provides a science-based criterion for the designation or recognition of the term “regenerative” in agriculture-related policies of the state. By defining “regenerative agriculture” and its associated practices, we are working to formalize holistic methods of farming that are designed to protect, sustain, and enhance natural resources on our farms and farming communities throughout California.

In October 2022, the State Board requested CDFA’s Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel (EFA SAP) to assist by conducting a review of existing definitions and literature to help determine common science-based practices related to “regenerative agriculture.” In May 2023, the EFA SAP responded with a recommended framework.

The framework included the following characteristics. 1) Being applicable, relevant and useful for California agriculture; 2) Leading to positive impacts on California’s environmental, social, human health and economic goals, including climate goals; 3) Providing measurable and verifiable outcomes, keeping in mind variability throughout the state, and emphasizing outcomes farmers and ranchers can easily measure and that are not economically burdensome to measure; 4) Allowing for context specific outcomes; 5) Soil health, including elements of physical quality, carbon sequestration, soil biodiversity, and alleviation of climate change as a foundational element.

The public listening sessions will help to inform the State Board’s process, to help provide recommendations on a definition of “regenerative agriculture.” Updates on the public listening sessions and the process for defining “regenerative agriculture” are available at: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/RegenerativeAg/>

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PESTICIDES (DPR)

RESTRICTED MATERIAL PESTICIDES

The Department of Pesticide Regulation noticed a proposed regulation for a statewide system that will provide the public with information prior to intended applications of restricted material pesticides in California.

DPR's proposed regulation builds on the process in the state of California to regulate restricted material pesticides. Applicators must be licensed, obtain a permit, and provide notice to the county agricultural commissioner prior to applications of restricted material pesticides. The proposed regulation would require information about restricted material applications for the production of an agricultural commodity to be submitted electronically to DPR for public posting through a new statewide information system 24 hours prior to intended restricted material pesticide applications except for soil fumigant restricted materials, which would be posted 48 hours before an intended application.

The proposed regulation complements California's existing regulatory system that includes the evaluation and registration of pesticides before use, restrictions on pesticide use to reduce risk to people and the environment, and the enforcement of pesticide laws and regulations by DPR and the state's 55 county agricultural commissioners.

DPR is holding three public hearings on the regulation: Dec. 13 in Clovis, Dec. 14 in Ventura and Dec. 19 in a virtual setting. The department is additionally accepting written comments on the proposed regulation between Nov. 3, 2023, and Jan. 12, 24.

The proposed regulation follows a two-year period of outreach conducted by DPR to inform development of the statewide information system, including four focus groups and eight public meetings held between 2021-2022 and a series of pilot projects hosted by four counties to test elements of system design in 2022. The department is currently conducting beta testing to inform the ongoing development of the technology needed to support the statewide system. The department began system development in 2021 after the state's 2021-2022 budget allocated an initial \$10 million over four years for that purpose.

The draft regulation can be viewed on DPR's [website](#).

Public Comment Period Open Nov. 3, 2023, through Jan. 12, 2024

SUSTAINABLE PEST MANAGEMENT

The California Farm Bureau's Chris Reardon participated in tour on Thursday, November 16th with our partners at the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. The focus was on the Department of Pesticide Regulation's (DPR) Sustainable Pest Management Proposal and was appreciative of Karen Morrison, DPR's Chief Deputy Director and staff for spending an afternoon with us discussing our concerns. Especially want to thank Daniel Bays, Jake Wenger, Anna Genasci and Tom Orvis for providing this opportunity to have frank and honest conversation on this important issue.