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Senate Bill 237 Agriculture Climate Benefits Act *By Senator Lois Wolk*

Bill Summary

SB 237 defines the eligible uses of funds designated to California's agricultural sector from implementation of the state's climate change law. Specifically, the funds would be eligible for research and demonstration, technical assistance and financial incentives for agricultural practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support climate change adaptation.

Background and Analysis

AB 32 recognizes that climate change will have detrimental effects on some of the state's largest industries, including agriculture. Much is at stake – California agriculture contributes \$37 billion annually to California's economy and supplies more than half of the country's fruit and vegetables.

In a state where water is already scarce, climate change scenarios predict that water supplies will become increasingly constrained. Warming temperatures also threaten to shift the kinds of crops that can be grown in the state. Statewide, the impact of climate change on California agriculture could hamper food and fiber production.

At the same time, agriculture can help reduce GHG emissions and meet California's AB 32 objectives. Research funded by the California Energy Commission suggests that some agricultural practices not only reduce GHGs, but may also sequester atmospheric carbon in the soil.

Once the legislature allocates funds to the agriculture sector from state climate change programs, SB 237 designates the following eligible uses:

1. Research and demonstration to examine the farming practices, systems and food processing that reduce GHG emissions, sequester atmospheric carbon and adapt to climate change.
2. Technical assistance for producers and processors that communicates research findings into real opportunities for California agriculture to provide voluntary GHG reductions and adaptation activities.
3. Incentives to overcome barriers to agricultural practices that mitigate and adapt to climate change while providing environmental and health co-benefits, including improved air and water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat and water conservation.

SB 237 will help meet the objectives of AB 32 and help address the unique climate change challenges faced by California agriculture.

Support

Audubon California
California Certified Organic Farmers
California Climate and Agriculture Network
California Farmers Union
California State Grange
Californians Against Waste
Center for Food Safety
Center for Land Based Learning
Clean Water Action
Cleveland National Forest Foundation
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Defenders of Wildlife
Dixon Ridge Farms
Ecological Farming Association
Edible San Diego
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Hedgerow Farms
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San Diego Food Not Lawns
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San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project
Save Our Forests and Ranchlands
Sierra Orchards
Soil Born Farm Urban Agriculture and Education Project
The Global Action Research Center
Victory Gardens San Diego
Wild Farm Alliance
Zero Waste San Diego

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