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Agriculture Climate Benefits Act earns support

Wolk bill to support agricultural solutions to climate change moves forward

SACRAMENTO—The Assembly’s Natural Resources Committee today approved Senate Bill 367 by Senator Lois Wolk (Davis) to provide California’s farmers and ranchers greater opportunities to reduce their greenhouse gas emission reductions and adapt to the state’s changing climate.

“Agriculture is a vital part of our state’s economy already threatened by rising temperatures, limited water resources and other effects of climate change. But agriculture can also play an important role in addressing climate change,” said Senator Lois Wolk (D-Davis). “I applaud the committee’s support of SB 367, which maximizes opportunities for California’s farmers and ranchers to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and cope with our changing climate.”

Climate change scenarios predict increasingly constrained water supplies and warming temperatures in California, changes that could shift the kinds of crops that can be grown in the state—hampering food and fiber production in the decades to come.

SB 367, known as the Agriculture Climate Benefits Act, provides California’s agricultural sector greater access to programs and other resources to help farmers and ranchers develop projects and farming practices to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and potentially sequester atmospheric carbon in the soil, providing additional environmental and health benefits.

“California farmers can make a big contribution to the state’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. SB 367 will help farmers adopt a range of climate-friendly farming practices that benefit consumers, the environment, and agriculture,” said Dave Runsten, Policy Director for the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, which is cosponsoring the bill with the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN).

“Farmers can provide climate benefits by storing carbon in soil, producing renewable energy, conserving water, and more,” said CalCAN’s Executive Director, Renata Brillinger. “Thanks to Senator Wolk’s leadership, SB 367 will unleash the potential of California’s farmers and ranchers to contribute solutions to the climate crisis.”

SB 367 is one of 11 bills that make up the Senate’s California Climate Leadership package, a collection of bills to establish new environmental and energy standards that will spur innovation and economic growth, protect the state’s environment, and make renewable energy and clean technology accessible to all Californians.

SB 367, which will next be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee, has broad support from environmental and farm groups such as the American Farmland Trust, Audubon California, the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, California Certified Organic Farmers, Californians Against Waste, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Entrepreneurs, Sustainable Conservation, the Trust for Public Land and the California League of Conservation Voters.

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