



AB 2377 (Irwin) Technical Assistance for Agricultural Programs

SUMMARY

AB 2377 would fund technical assistance for farmers and ranchers seeking to transition to Climate Smart Agriculture. AB 2377 would require that 15 percent of the annual budgets for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP), Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), and Healthy Soils Program be used to provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers applying for those programs.

The Climate Smart Agriculture Act will improve farmer participation, project implementation, and the impact of Climate Smart Agriculture programs.

BACKGROUND

California is the nation's leader in food production and contributes significantly to our global food security and state economy.

California's 77,000 farms and ranches are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including constrained water resources, extreme weather events, and new pest and disease pressures.

Many of agriculture's climate change mitigation strategies provide numerous agronomic, environmental and public health benefits, including increased water retention in soils, improved crop and forage yields, improved air and water quality, and increased energy and water savings.

California's Climate Smart Agriculture programs provide important financial resources to encourage farmers and ranchers to adopt farm management practices that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration to help meet the state's 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

Improved delivery of technical assistance to farmers and ranchers, including project design, grant application assistance and project implementation, will allow for a greater diversity of producers to successfully participate in the Climate Smart Agriculture programs. Increased technical assistance for farmers and ranchers will also improve the overall climate impact of the Climate Smart Agriculture programs.

Last Updated 27-Feb-18

Small and moderately-scaled producers, including many women and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, who do not have ready access to consultants, are especially in need of greater support to improve their participation in the Climate Smart Agriculture programs.

THIS BILL

This proposal recognizes the integral role technical assistance plays in transforming agricultural practices and improving Climate Smart Agriculture program participation and project implementation and will help increase climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits for producers and the state.

The bill requires that 15 percent of the annual budgets for the SWEEP, AMMP, and Healthy Soils programs are used to establish a technical assistance grant program to provide up to \$125,000 annually for up to three years to technical assistance providers to support SWEEP, AMMP, and Healthy Soils program applicants through outreach, project design, application assistance, and project implementation.

The bill prioritizes technical assistance for small and moderately-scaled farms and ranches and requires at least 25 percent of the technical assistance funds available to be provided to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as defined in Food and Agriculture Code Section 512.

SUPPORT

Sponsor: California Climate & Agriculture Network
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
CA Certified Organic Farmers
CA FarmLink
Ecological Farming Association
Wild Farm Alliance
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center

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