

Bond measure a bright spot

If approved by voters, bond would fund Healthy Soils Program and SWEEP

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SWEEP funds irrigation management improvements on farms and ranches that save water and energy while reducing GHG emissions. Since 2014, this program has received over \$60 million. Over the life of the program, farmer demand for the program has exceeded available funding by more than 200 percent. (michael_swan, Flickr/Creative Commons)

SACRAMENTO — Late last night, Governor Brown signed SB 5, a \$4 billion bond measure, that provides important natural resources and sustainable agriculture funding. If approved by voters in June 2018, the bond measure would make a one-time allocation of \$10 million for the Healthy Soils Program and \$20 million for State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP)— two Climate Smart Agriculture programs that were cut in the recent [climate investments budget deal](#).

“The bond measure will give Californians an important opportunity to invest in sustainable agricultural solutions to climate,” said Jeanne Merrill, Policy Director of the California Climate

and Agriculture Network (CalCAN). “An opportunity, that unfortunately, the Governor and the legislature walked away from in this recent climate investments budget.”

The [Healthy Soils Program](#) funds incentives and demonstration projects for soil management practices on farms and ranches that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The program launched this summer with \$7.5 million. Program funding was zeroed out for FY 2017-18 in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund budget bills.

[SWEEP](#) funds irrigation management improvements on farms and ranches that save water and energy while reducing GHG emissions. Since 2014, this program has received over \$60 million. Over the life of the program, farmer demand for the program has exceeded available funding by more than 200 percent. As climate models suggest California will continue to experience constrained water resources in the years and decades to come, SWEEP is an important part of realizing the Governor’s long-term water conservation goals. Like Healthy Soils, the program will be without funding next year.

SB 5 also includes \$20 million in funding for the California Farmland Conservancy Program, which will permanently protect agricultural lands. And it includes \$30 million for agriculture adaptation to support farmers in increasing on-farm resilience to the many climate-related challenges they face with extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, drought and new pest and disease problems.

—California Climate and Agriculture Network