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SB-774 Research program: firefighting: wildland and wildland-urban interface. (2017-2018)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2017–2018 REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL

NO. 774

Introduced by Senators Leyva and McGuire
(Coauthor: Senator Hernandez)
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bonta and Flora)

February 17, 2017

An act to add Chapter 4.9 (commencing with Section 89460) to Part 55 of Division 8 of Title 3 of the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 774, Leyva. Research program: firefighting: wildland and wildland-urban interface.

Existing law requires the California State University to offer undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education. Existing law authorizes research, scholarship, and creative activity in support of the university's undergraduate and graduate instructional mission.

This bill would require the Trustees of the California State University to oversee a competitive process to award funds for the Wildland and Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Research Grant Program to one or more campuses of the California State University that can demonstrate an ability to fulfill certain criteria for, among other purposes, conducting research in critical areas of advancement and reform in wildland firefighting and issues vital to the state in the advancement of the understanding of fires in the wildland-urban interface. The bill would require trustees, by July 1, 2020, and every July 1 thereafter, to submit a report to the Legislature on the research and activities of the program. The bill would appropriate \$5,000,000 from the General Fund to the trustees for these purposes, thereby making an appropriation.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: yes Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 4.9 (commencing with Section 89460) is added to Part 55 of Division 8 of Title 3 of the Education Code, to read:

CHAPTER 4.9. California State University: Wildland and Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Research Grant Program

89460. (a) The trustees shall oversee a competitive process to award funds for the Wildland and Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Research Grant Program to one or more campuses of the California State University that can demonstrate an ability to fulfill the following criteria:

- (1) Offers a degree in wildfire-related studies.
- (2) Works in partnership with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and associations or organizations representing state and local agency firefighters.
- (3) Identifies risks to firefighter safety in the wildland-urban interface.
- (4) Has expertise, tools, technologies, and operational strategies for wildland firefighting.
- (5) Has expertise in materials, combustion, physics, environmental science, and associated laws, regulations, and policy related to wildland fire.

(b) The Wildland and Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Research Program shall be established for all of the following purposes:

- (1) Conducting research on the following:
 - (A) Critical areas of advancement and reform in fighting wildfires.
 - (B) Issues vital to the state's advancement in the understanding of fires in the wildland-urban interface, with a focus on improving firefighters' health and safety, and attack effectiveness.
 - (C) Strategies to minimize and mitigate the health and safety risks experienced by firefighters in the field.
 - (D) Improvement in the understanding of the concomitant staffing needs necessary to protect our communities.
 - (E) Identification of short- and long-term exposures of, and acute and chronic impacts to, firefighters.
 - (F) Identification of, and recommendations for, strategies and tools to improve identification of threats and exposures to wildland firefighters.
 - (G) Analyzing strategies and tools to improve the identification of threats and exposures to wildland firefighters.
 - (H) Analyzing strategies to improve attack effectiveness and community protection.
 - (I) Provision of independent scientific and technical responses to research and development program at the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
- (2) Conducting symposiums on wildland and wildland-urban interface.
- (3) Prioritizing education, training, and public outreach.
- (4) Establishing a mechanism for the dissemination of the results of the research through advanced education and training programs for firefighters, first responders, and other professionals that have significant responsibilities in the wildland-urban interface.

(c) (1) Notwithstanding Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, on or before July 1, 2020, and every July 1, thereafter, the trustees shall provide a report to the Legislature on the research and activities of the program.

(2) The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

SEC. 2. The sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Trustees of the California State University for purposes of Section 89460 of the Education Code.