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**AB-687 Forestry: timber operations: maintenance of timberlands for fuels reduction.** (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 09, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**NO. 687**

Introduced by Assembly Member Patterson  
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alanis, Hadwick, and Macedo)  
(Coauthors: Senators Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, and Seyarto)

February 14, 2025

An act to add *and repeal* Section 4581.5 ~~to~~ *of* the Public Resources Code, relating to forestry.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 687, as amended, Patterson. Forestry: timber operations: maintenance of timberlands for fuels reduction.

The Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 prohibits a person from conducting timber operations unless a timber harvesting plan prepared by a registered professional forester has been submitted to, and approved by, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The act provides that any person who willfully violates any provision of the act or rule or regulation of the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is guilty of a misdemeanor.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of an environmental impact report on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment.

This bill would authorize up to 35 projects per year that are exclusively for noncommercial wildfire fuels reduction in timberland, less than ~~1,000~~ *1,500* acres in size, and paid for in part or in whole with public funds, to prepare a timber harvesting plan to comply with CEQA. By expanding the scope of a crime, the bill would create a state-mandated local program. *The bill would repeal these provisions on January 1, 2031.*

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 4581.5 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

**4581.5. (a)** Notwithstanding Section 4527, up to 35 projects per year, that are each exclusively for noncommercial wildfire fuels reduction in timberland, are less than ~~1,000~~ 1,500 acres in size, and are paid for in part or in whole with public funds, may prepare a timber harvesting plan pursuant to this article to comply with Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000).

*(b) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2031, and as of that date is repealed.*

**SEC. 2.** No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.