

AB 125: The Equitable Economic Recovery, Healthy Food Access, Climate Resilient Farms & Worker Protection Bond Act

Author: Assemblymember Robert Rivas
Co-authors: Assemblymembers Bloom,
Kalra, Santiago, Stone, E. Garcia, Levine,
Villapudua



SUMMARY

Assembly Bill 125 will place the Food and Farming Resilience and Economic Recovery Bond on the 2022 ballot. The bond's investments will accelerate our state's economic recovery and improve the state's climate change readiness while also increasing healthy food access for Californians, and protecting our essential farmworkers.

BACKGROUND

The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the vulnerabilities of California's communities, exacerbating food insecurity and exposing essential frontline workers to disproportionate health risks. The impacts of the pandemic have been many and diverse, and have fallen heavily on people of color, including the farmworker communities who harvest our food and essential workers throughout our food supply chains. Farmers have lost large percentages of crops due to volatile demand within a rigid supply chain. Shattered food supply chains have resulted in farm products rotting in the fields as millions of Californians go hungry. It is clear that we need to invest in the food and farming systems in California to combat hunger, create and restore jobs, support agricultural businesses, and build resilient communities.

WHAT WILL AB 125 DO?

The bond will invest \$3.122 billion over five years to accelerate California's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while combating climate change, improving food security, and protecting our essential farmworkers. It includes funding for these infrastructure improvements:

\$600 million for regional and local food processing, distribution, and market infrastructure — California needs many more food hubs to aggregate supply from producers, as well as food processing, meat processing and livestock slaughter facilities, cold storage, and distribution facilities — all with an eye towards building sustainable and resilient local and regional food systems.

\$637 million for farmworker safety and well-being — This bond addresses farmworker health and safety such as safe and affordable housing, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on farmworker homes, and personal protective equipment for wildfires and COVID.

\$750 million for infrastructure to combat hunger — With an estimated 6.4 million food insecure Californians, improves food access for the most vulnerable Californians to combat hunger.

\$1.135 billion for sustainable agriculture, on-farm climate resilience and biodiversity and compost facilities — Diverse, organic, and regenerative cropping systems help reduce farmers' economic vulnerabilities by expanding market opportunities. These investments also modernize fairground infrastructure, protect groundwater resources, generate more compost, rebuild soil health and improve on-farm resilience to droughts, floods, and pest outbreaks.

AB 125 FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

TOTAL FUNDING: \$3.122 BILLION

Chapter 2: IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL RESILIENCE AND ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: \$750 million

Department of Food and Agriculture: \$477 million

- Grants for farmers and ranchers to do soil health practices that increase carbon sequestration, reduce greenhouse gas emissions: **\$175 million**
- Grants for farmers and ranchers for water use efficiency projects on farm to protect surface and groundwater: **\$100 million**
- Grants for farmers and ranchers to do alternative manure management to reduce methane emissions and increase carbon sequestration: **\$100 million**
- Technical assistance grants to providers to work with farmers and ranchers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration and improve resilience: **\$12 million**
- Grants for farmers to transition to organic agricultural production: **\$35 million**
- Grants to technical assistance providers and university researchers to develop climate change adaptation decision- support tools for farmers and ranchers: **\$2 million**
- Grants under the Biological Integrated Pest Management Program to support on-farm demonstration projects that support farmers in reducing or eliminating toxic pesticide use: **\$18 million**
- Grants for farmers and ranchers to support prescribed grazing infrastructure to support wildfire prevention, improved livestock management, and biodiversity enhancement: **\$10 million**
- Funding for the University of California Cooperative Extension to hire farm advisors, community educators or extension specialists with specialties in certified organic agriculture, small farm advising, and climate resilience and mitigation management and with culturally competence in the provisioning of services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers: **\$10 million**
- Funding for Tribal governments and organizations to support Tribal staffing of Agricultural or Food System Managers and Tribal Food Inspectors to further food sovereignty initiatives: **\$5 million**
- Grants to community colleges, universities and qualified nonprofits to train beginning farmers and ranchers and agricultural workers in business planning and farm management that includes sustainable and organic agricultural practices and a focus on climate resilience and mitigation management: **\$5 million**
- Grants to community colleges, and universities, and qualified nonprofits to train technical service providers in agriculture and natural resource management: **\$5 million**

Department of Conservation: \$273 million

- Grants for the protection and enhancement of agricultural lands, including the acquisition of fee title or easements, that improve climate resilience, pollinator habitat, California native biodiversity, flood protection, or groundwater recharge: **\$122.5 million**
- Funding for DOC to consult with Tribes to determine where traditional Tribal lands are located for the purpose of offering Tribes the right of first refusal to purchase the land and develop collaborative management processes for land management consistent with Tribal goals and access rights: **\$500,000**
- Grants for improvement of land access and tenure among socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers and beginning farmers and ranchers. Eligible projects include acquisition of fee title projects for the purposes of selling or leasing the acquired agricultural land to socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers and beginning farmers and ranchers: **\$125 million**
- Grants to develop regional farmer training centers to provide culturally-relevant assistance for socially disadvantaged farmers, beginning farmers and farmworkers: **\$15 million**
- Funding to hire Resource Conservation Districts and Tribal resource conservation districts staff with expertise in organic and sustainable agriculture, conservation planning, climate resilience and mitigation management, and culturally competent provision of services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers: **\$5 million**

- Grants to qualified nonprofits, community colleges or universities to create farm and ranch land linking programs that connect beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who are looking for agricultural land to farm to existing agricultural landowners for the purpose of establishing secure land tenure and accelerate equitable land access opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers: **\$5 million**

Chapter 3: PROTECT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CALIFORNIA’S FARMWORKERS: \$637 million

Strategic Growth Council: \$450 million

Grants for the development of multi-unit, family housing for farmworker families and households.

Department of Community Services and Development: \$50 million

Grants for improved energy efficiency, indoor air quality, renewable energy use and climate resilience for farmworker housing, either single family homes or multi-unit buildings.

Division of Occupational Safety and Health: \$25 million

Funding for the creation of a stockpile of personal protection equipment for farmworkers to be used in cases of emergencies such as wildfires or disease outbreaks.

State Water Resources Control Board: \$100 million

Grants to provide safe drinking and promote public health for farmworker families who lack access to safe and reliable drinking water sources.

Office of Emergency Services: \$12 million

Funding to expand the California State Warning Center to include targeted alerts for public health dangers.

Chapter 4: EXPAND HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS AND COMBATING HUNGER: \$750 million

Department of General Services: \$230 million

Grants for improving school meals, including funding kitchens, meal preparation, meal service, and dining infrastructure utilized for school nutrition programs.

Department of Social Services: \$150 million

Grants for the enhancement and disaster resilience needs of the emergency food delivery system.

Department of Food and Agriculture: \$270 million

Grants designed to ensure communities and Tribes may obtain or produce foods that are healthy, nutrient-dense, culturally-relevant, and grown or produced in California, prioritizing California-produced organic food products, for residents who are food insecure or with limited- to no-access, or are low-income, rural or Tribal.

Department of Aging: \$100 million

Grants that fund infrastructure to improve senior nutrition programs.

Chapter 5: STRENGTHEN REGIONAL FOOD ECONOMIES: \$600 million

Department of Food and Agriculture: \$570 million

- Grants for the enhancement of local and regional food and fiber infrastructure in response to changing climate conditions, to strengthen urban-rural connectivity, and to support the development of more resilient and more equitable food economy: **\$500 million**
- Grants to develop new meat processing facilities, expansion or upgrade of existing meat processing facilities to increase the state and Tribal meat processing capacity: **\$60 million**
- Grants to provide funding to community colleges, universities, technical and vocational schools, and Tribal Governments communities and educational institutions, to provide workforce safety and development training for the meat processing industry: **\$10 million**

California Coastal Conservancy: **\$30 million**

Grants for the development, restoration, and reconstruction of fishing facilities and related infrastructure serving the commercial fishing industry in urban coastal waterfront areas.

Chapter 6: PROTECT GROUNDWATER RESOURCES: \$75 MILLION

Department of Conservation: **\$50 million**

Grants to groundwater sustainability agencies, counties, local agencies, and nongovernmental organizations for development or implementation of local programs supporting or facilitating reduced use of groundwater and multi-benefit land repurposing at the basin scale.

Department of Food and Agriculture: **\$12.5 million**

Technical assistance grants to support farmers and ranchers located in critically over-drafted basins in the San Joaquin Valley to reach the water use reduction goals of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Department of Water Resources: **\$12.5 million**

Grants to groundwater sustainability agencies in the San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast for the purpose of assisting small and socially disadvantaged farmers, and farmers and ranchers located in disadvantaged communities in meeting their requirements under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Chapter 7: SUPPORT 21ST CENTURY ECOLOGICAL PEST MANAGEMENT: \$10 MILLION

Department of Food and Agriculture: **\$10 million**

Grants to nonprofit organizations, public agencies, tribal governments, tribal organizations, crop or pest advisors, farmers, and insectaries to construct insectaries to produce beneficial organisms in support of ecological integrated pest management.

Chapter 8: REDUCE FOOD WASTE AND INCREASE COMPOST PRODUCTION: \$200 MILLION

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery: **\$200 million**

Grants or make performance payments for compost infrastructure and food recovery projects at existing and new community composting facilities, on-farm composting facilities, and commercial composting facilities to reduce short-lived climate pollutants and nitrous oxide emissions and to support sequestration of carbon in the state's agricultural and urban soils.

Chapter 9: REBUILDING AND GREENING STATE AND COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS: \$100 MILLION

Department of Food & Agriculture: **\$100 million**

Funding to restore, upgrade, modernize, and improve state and county fairgrounds to serve as community centers, exposition sites, emergency and evacuation shelters, food and agriculture education centers, and farm incubator and food business centers.

The full bill text is available here:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1253

For more information: www.voteformyourfood.org or email voteformyourfood@gmail.com

AB 125 Coalition Members

Agricultural Institute of Marin • American Farmland Trust • California Climate & Agriculture Network (CalCAN) • Californians for Pesticide Reform • Carbon Cycle Institute • California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) • Center for Food Safety • Central California Environmental Justice Network • Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO) • Community Alliance with Family Farmers • Intertribal Agriculture Council • Monterey Bay Central Labor Council • Natural Resources Defense Council • Pesticide Action Network • Roots of Change • Sustainable Agriculture Education • UFCW Western States Council