

## Rural County Benefits

### November 2018 Water Supply and Water Quality Bond Act

#### Fire prevention and recovery

The bond act provides more funds for fire prevention and recovery than any other previous state measure. All the following provisions fund fire-related activities. \$100 million for fire recovery and mitigation was included in the bond at the recommendation of RCRC. As appropriate, funds may be spent on fire recovery and fuel reduction on federal lands.

All funds allocated to watershed management agencies can be spent on fire prevention and recovery:

**86080.** The sum of two billion three hundred fifty-five million dollars (\$2,355,000,000) is appropriated from the Fund to protect, restore and improve the health of watershed lands, including forest lands (including oaks, redwoods and sequoias), meadows, wetlands, chaparral, riparian habitat and other watershed lands, including lands owned by the United States, in order to protect and improve water supply and water quality, improve forest health, **reduce fire danger consistent with the best available science, mitigate the effects of wildfires on water quality and supply**, increase flood protection, remediate aquifers, or to protect or restore riparian or aquatic resources. No grants made pursuant to this section shall be for reservoir maintenance or sediment removal from a reservoir or upstream of a reservoir, except as necessary for field research required pursuant to subdivision (a).

(a) Two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the protection, restoration and improvement of Sierra Nevada watersheds, pursuant to Division 23.3 (commencing with Section 33300) of the Public Resources Code and including the purposes outlined in Section 33320 of the Public Resources Code. Funds shall also be spent for the implementation and to further the goals and purposes of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program. Projects eligible for funding under the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program may include research and monitoring to measure the impact of forest restoration work on water supply, climate and other benefits, including long-term air quality, water quality and quantity, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon storage, habitat, recreational uses, and community vitality. Projects funded under the Sierra Nevada watershed Improvement Program shall be based on the best available science regarding forest restoration and must be undertaken to improve water supply and quality, protect and restore ecological values and to **promote forest conditions that are more resilient to wildfire**, climate change, and other disturbances. **The Sierra Nevada Conservancy may make grants to federal agencies if it determines such grants are the most efficient way to implement the intent of this division on federally managed lands.**

**(x) (1)** The sum of fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) is appropriated from the Fund to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the purpose of awarding grants within the jurisdiction of the Conservancy to eligible entities as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 86166 for the purpose of reducing the threat of wildfires which would negatively impact watershed health. Projects may be for the purpose of hazardous fuel reduction, postfire watershed rehabilitation, forest management practices that

**promote forest resilience to severe wildfire, climate change, and other disturbances, and development of local plans to reduce the risk of wildfires that could adversely affect watershed health. Preference shall be given to grants which include matching funds, but this preference may be reduced or eliminated for grants which benefit disadvantaged communities or economically distressed areas.**

**(2) The sum of fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) is appropriated from the Fund to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for the purpose of awarding grants in areas outside the jurisdiction of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to eligible entities as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 86166 for the purpose of reducing the threat of wildfires which would negatively impact watershed health. Projects may be for the purpose of hazardous fuel reduction, postfire watershed rehabilitation and restoration, forest management practices that promote forest resilience to severe wildfire, climate change, and other disturbances, and development of local plans to reduce the risk of wildfires that could adversely affect watershed health. Preference shall be given to grants which include matching funds, but this preference may be reduced or eliminated for grants which benefit disadvantaged communities or economically distressed areas.**

86084. (b) (1) Funds appropriated pursuant to this chapter may be used for protection and restoration of forests, meadows, wetlands, riparian habitat, coastal resources, and near-shore ocean habitat; to acquire land and easements to protect these resources and avoid development that may reduce watershed health, and to take other measures that protect or improve the quality or quantity of water supplies downstream from projects funded in whole or in part by this chapter. **Forest restoration projects, including but not limited to hazardous fuel reduction, post-fire watershed rehabilitation,** and forest management and tree planting using appropriate native plants shall be based on the best available science regarding forest restoration and must be undertaken to protect and restore ecological values and to promote forest conditions that are more resilient to wildfire, climate change, and other disturbances.

**(2) Fuel hazard reduction activities on United States Forest Service lands in the Sierra Nevada and similar forest types shall be generally consistent with objectives of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program and the best available science, including United States Forest Service General Technical Report 220 as it may be updated.**

Central Valley Fish Advisory Committee recommends expenditure of \$400 million for fisheries restoration projects. Section 86106(f)(1)(C) states:

(C) In proposing projects, the committee shall take into account the entire life cycle of the fish species to be benefitted, and shall consider the interaction of the effects of each project within a river basin with projects in other river basins. **The committee shall also consider adverse impacts resulting from poor watershed health, including severe wildfire and extensive tree mortality.**

**86178.** Agencies implementing this division shall give special consideration to projects that employ new or innovative technology or practices, including decision support tools that support the integration of multiple strategies and jurisdictions, including, but not limited to, water supply, **wildfire reduction,** habitat improvement, invasive weed control, flood control, land use, and sanitation.

## **Safe Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment \$750 million**

Many rural communities lack funds to develop safe drinking water and safe methods of disposing of wastewater. The water bond includes \$500 million for safe drinking water systems and \$250 million for wastewater disposal systems.

### **Economically distressed areas**

At the request of RCRC, many programs in the bond act give high priority to grants to benefit economically distressed areas (EDAs), as well as disadvantaged communities. Matching fund requirements are waived for economically distressed areas

**86010.** (a) For the purposes of awarding funding pursuant to this chapter, a local cost share of not less than 50 percent (50%) of the total costs of the project shall be required. The cost-sharing requirement may be waived or reduced for projects that directly benefit a disadvantaged community or an economically distressed area.

**86083 .** In making grants pursuant to this chapter, agencies shall give high priority to applications that include cost sharing, and to grants that benefit disadvantaged communities and economically distressed areas whether or not they include cost sharing.

**86151(c)** Any agency providing funds pursuant to this division to disadvantaged communities or economically distressed areas may provide funding to assist these communities in applying for that funding, including technical and grant writing assistance. These funds may be provided to nonprofit organizations and local public agencies assisting these communities.

Technology assistance is provided free for wastewater recycling and desalination projects in EDAs.

Economically distressed areas get high priority in the following grant programs:

Desalination  
Water Conservation  
Central Valley Flood Protection  
Groundwater management and SGMA implementation

**86163(b)** In the appropriation and expenditure of funding authorized by this division, priority will be given to projects that leverage private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit. All state agencies receiving funds pursuant to this division shall seek to leverage the funds to the greatest extent possible, but agencies shall take into account the limited ability to cost share by small public agencies, and by agencies seeking to benefit disadvantaged communities and economically distressed areas.

### **Reduced cost sharing by small communities**

**86155.** (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this division, a local public agency with a population

of less than 100,000 and a median household income of less than one hundred percent (100%) of the state average household income shall be required to provide matching funds of no more than thirty-five percent (35%) for a grant for a project entirely within their jurisdiction. State agencies making grants to these local public agencies may provide funding in advance of construction of portions of the project, if the state agency determines that requiring the local public agency to wait for payment until the project is completed would make the project infeasible.

(b) Nothing in this section prohibits a state agency from making a grant to a disadvantaged community or economically distressed area that does not require cost sharing.

### **Property tax payments preference**

**86179.4.** In awarding grants for land acquisition, the Wildlife Conservation Board shall give preference to organizations that voluntarily pay property taxes.

**Central Valley Flood Plan Implementation \$150 million**

**Lake Tahoe Stormwater Management \$40 million**

**Integrated Regional Water Management Coordination \$5 million**

**Grants to Resource Conservation Districts and agricultural land protection \$60 million**

Resource Conservation Districts are eligible to compete for all other funds in the bond act.

**Salton Sea recovery and dust prevention \$200 million**

**Weed reduction and other land treatment for water conservation: \$100 million**

**Groundwater: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Implementation: \$640 million**

**Repair of Oroville Dam \$200 million**

**Removal of sediment below Oroville Dam: \$21 million**

**Butte County emergency communications equipment \$1 million**