

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 06/22/2026
POSITION: Neutral, note concerns

BILL NUMBER: SB 1153
AUTHOR: Caballero, Anna M

BILL SUMMARY: Disaster preparedness: urban retail water suppliers and public water systems: wildfire.

This bill requires all urban retail water suppliers that serve a high or very-high fire hazard severity zone to include incident-specific response procedures for wildfires as part of their disaster preparedness plans beginning on January 1, 2028.

This bill also clarifies that urban retail water suppliers are not responsible for maintaining water supply for wildfire defense.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) estimates minor and absorbable costs to the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Account.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection reports no fiscal impact.

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) estimates minor and absorbable costs. However, the Department of Finance notes the implementation of numerous bills with minor costs could lead to the need for additional staff and funding.

The Department of Finance notes that this bill is not likely to create a state reimbursable mandate because urban retail water suppliers have the authority to levy fees to offset the costs to implement provisions of this bill.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is neutral on this bill but notes concerns that this bill expands disaster preparedness planning mandates to smaller water suppliers that were not previously subject to these requirements under existing law.

Under existing federal law, water systems that serve more than 3,300 end users are required to prepare risk and resilience assessments (RRAs) and emergency response plans (ERPs). These plans must include actions and plans that lessen the impacts of malevolent acts and natural hazards and must be updated every five years. Under current state law, public water systems that serve more than 10,000 connections are required to review and revise their disaster preparedness plans with Cal OES.

This bill requires urban retail water systems, defined under state law as systems that serve more than 3,000 end users or supply over 3,000 acre-feet annually, located in high or very high fire hazard severity zones to include incident-specific response procedures for wildfires in their disaster

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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____ Position Disapproved _____
BILL ANALYSIS		Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)	

AUTHOR

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COMMENTS (continued)

preparedness plans. While these plans can be integrated into existing ERPs, smaller suppliers that serve between 3,000 and 3,300 end users will face new requirements to create plans that address wildfires. The procedures must include actions a water system can take to prepare, respond to and recover from a wildfire and mitigate its impacts. Water suppliers are then required to provide these response procedures to their respective county's office of emergency services.

The plans must be reviewed every five years and updated as necessary. Since water systems that serve less than 3,300 end users have not previously been required to create ERPs, they may face additional costs to meet the requirements of the bill.

Additionally, this bill specifies that the failure of urban retail water suppliers to comply with the actions in their plans or their inability to maintain water during a wildfire should not be considered a substantial cause of the damage from wildfires. This provides important legal clarity regarding the primary purpose of public water systems during wildfires.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)						Fund Code	
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)							
	CO	PROP							
	RV	98	FC	2027-2028	FC	2028-2029	FC		2029-2030
3940/SWRCB	SO	No			----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact	----		0306
0690/OES	SO	No			----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact	----		0001
3540/ForestFire	SO	No			----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact	----		0001
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>								
0001	General Fund								
0306	Safe Drinking Water Account								