

Date of Hearing: April 10, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Esmeralda Soria, Chair
AB 2827 (Reyes) – As Introduced February 15, 2024

SUBJECT: Invasive species: prevention

SUMMARY: This bill would find and declare that it is a primary goal of the state to prevent the introduction, and suppress the spread, of invasive species within its borders. Specifically, *this bill*:

- 1) Makes findings and declarations as follows:
 - a) Invasive species have the potential to cause extensive damage to California’s natural and working landscapes, native species, agriculture, the public, and economy.
 - b) Invasive species can threaten native flora and fauna, disrupt ecosystems, damage critical infrastructure, and result in further loss of biodiversity.
 - c) The impacts of increased goods movement, international travel, and climate change on invasive species are pervasive—shifting temperature patterns, altered precipitation, expanded vectors and host materials, and changes in ecosystems create new habitats and conditions that may enhance the survival, reproduction, and spread of these invasive species, posing additional threats to the state.
 - d) It is in the best interest of the state to adopt a proactive and coordinated approach to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- 2) Does the following:
 - a) Makes findings and declarations that it is a primary goal of the state to prevent the introduction, and suppress the spread, of invasive species within its borders.
 - b) Requires state agencies, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to develop and implement strategies to detect, control, monitor, and eradicate invasive species to protect the state’s agriculture, environment, and natural resources.
 - c) Requires the state to invest in research, outreach, and education programs to raise awareness about the risks and impacts of invasive species and promote responsible practices among residents, industries, and visitors.
 - d) Requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), in consultation with other relevant state agencies, to allocate funds, if available, to implement and enforce this article.
 - e) Requires state agencies to coordinate efforts, share information, and collaborate with federal, local, and tribal authorities to achieve the goal described in this section.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires CDFA to promote and protect the agricultural industry of the state.
- 2) Authorizes CDFA to expend in accordance with law all money that is made available for its use.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: One of the primary mandates of CDFA is to "Protect against invasion of exotic pests and diseases", as described in CDFA mission statement. California agricultural losses to exotic pests exceed \$3 billion annually. An invasive species is a species that does not occur naturally in a specific area and whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic (including agricultural) or environmental harm or harm to human health.

In California, invasive species pose a significant threat to the state's ecosystems and agricultural productivity, with pests being a primary concern. These invasive pests, ranging from insects like the Asian citrus psyllid to rodents like the Nutria, disrupt native habitats and cause extensive damage to crops, forests, and urban landscapes. The economic toll is substantial, with billions of dollars lost annually due to decreased crop yields, increased pest control measures, and environmental restoration efforts. Furthermore, invasive pests often lack natural predators or competitors in their new environments, allowing them to proliferate rapidly and outcompete native species for resources. Efforts to manage these invasive pests involve a combination of regulatory measures, biological control methods, and public awareness campaigns to prevent their introduction and spread. However, the dynamic nature of ecosystems and global trade continue to present challenges in effectively mitigating the impacts of invasive species on California's ecosystems and economy.

According to CDFA, California is currently experiencing one of the highest levels of exotic fruit fly infestations in its recorded history. In 2023, there were more than 900 fruit fly detections in 15 counties. In comparison, an average year will see about 75 fruit fly detections in seven counties.

In 2023, the Tau Fruit Fly was found in California, noting the first time this species has been present in the Western Hemisphere. This has initiated a significant quarantine of the San Bernardino valley. The Oriental Fruit Fly has also proven to be alarming to the region, posing a threat to over 230 crops, including nuts, vegetables, and berries. CDFA officials stress that the Oriental Fruit Fly can cause billions of dollars in losses every year, if the species becomes permanently established in California. Additionally, nutria, an invasive rodent found in 2023, threatened the stability of aging levees and earthen dams across California.

According to the Author, despite concerted efforts in pest prevention, the current strategies often fail, placing the state at ongoing risk. By prioritizing prevention efforts, the state can mitigate the ecological and economic damage caused by invasive species, preserve native biodiversity and enhance ecosystem functions. A proactive approach to prevention reduces the need for costly eradication and control measures, helps maintain the integrity of agricultural systems, and fosters a sense of stewardship and responsibility towards California's natural resources. A focused goal for invasive species prevention empowers policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders to work collaboratively towards safeguarding the state's ecosystems and promoting sustainable development.

Supporters' state that this bill acknowledges the threats invasive species are and declares that through coordinated and proactive action focused on prevention, California can further

environmental stewardship. While invasive species have traditionally been managed in silos, this bill charges various state agencies to work together to study, plan and manage invasive species issues. By developing and implementing strategies focused on prevention, the state can reduce the need for costly eradication and control measures, while maintaining the integrity of its agricultural and natural ecosystems. Given invasive species impacts will become more acute, this bill enables the State to be better prepared for future challenges.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

Agricultural Council of California
Almond Alliance of California
California Apple Commission
California Association of Winegrape Growers
California Avocado Commission
California Blueberry Association
California Blueberry Commission
California Cattlemen's Association
California Chamber of Commerce
California Citrus Mutual
California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Farmland Trust
California Fresh Fruit Association
California Walnut Commission
City of Rancho Cucamonga
Grower-shipper Association of Central California
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Olive Growers Council of California
Redlands Chamber of Commerce
Western Agricultural Processors Association
Western Growers Association

Opposition

None on file.

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