

Date of Hearing: March 26, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Esmeralda Soria, Chair
AB 1486 (Soria) – As Introduced February 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Climate resiliency: research farms: grant program

SUMMARY: This bill would, upon an appropriation by the Legislature for this purpose, require the State Department of Education (DOE), in consultation with the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), on or before January 1, 2026, to establish a grant program to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that are designated as Agricultural Experiment Stations or Agricultural Research Institutes to develop or expand research farms to improve climate resiliency, as specified.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Makes \$15,000,000 available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the DOE, in consultation with the CDFA, for purposes of providing grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that are designated as Agricultural Experiment Stations or Agricultural Research Institutes, to develop research farms to improve climate resiliency, as specified. (Public Resource Code 93570)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: Proposition 4 (Prop 4), The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, authorized the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$10,000,000,000 to finance projects for safe drinking water, drought, flood, and water resilience, wildfire and forest resilience, coastal resilience, extreme heat mitigation, biodiversity and nature-based climate solutions, climate-smart, sustainable, and resilient farms, ranches, and working lands, park creation and outdoor access, and clean air programs.

Of these funds, Prop 4 made \$15,000,000 available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the DOE, in consultation with the CDFA, to provide grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that are designated as Agricultural Experiment Stations or Agricultural Research Institutes, to develop research farms to improve climate resiliency, as specified. The proposed State budget for 2025-26 does not allocated the Prop 4 funds for the research farm grants. This bill will start the grant making process sooner.

In the California State College (CSU) system, there are ten existing campus centers and institutes (CCIs) that are devoted to agricultural research at the CSU. These research organizations are affiliated with CSU campuses but also offer noncredit instruction, information or other services to groups beyond the campus community. They are designed to serve public organizations or agencies, private companies and even individuals throughout California. The CCIs range from the Agribusiness Institute at Chico State University offering general agricultural business expertise, to the Irrigation Training and Resource Center at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, which provides training and technical assistance for industry members, farmers and state and local government agencies. The four CSU campuses with colleges of agriculture operate working farms and ranches to support classes and research in agriculture.

California has numerous research farms and programs, with the University of California (UC) playing a key role through its UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) and the UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CA&ES), focusing on improving food systems and addressing agricultural challenges.

Prop 4's Research Farm Grants will help California's Public Colleges improve existing or help start up research farms with a focus on improving climate resiliency.

Proposed Amendment: change the start of the grant program from January 1, 2026 to July 1, 2026, to ensure that the DOE and CDFA have appropriate time to develop the Research Farm grant program.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Sustainable Conservation

Opposition

None on file.

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