

Senate Bill 231

Amended, June 16, 2023

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 231 requires the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to adopt key recommendations made by the independent California State Auditor. These recommendations stem from a recently released audit which examined DWR's management of the state's water supply. Specifically, SB 231 would require DWR to

- Establish a formal process to annually evaluate the accuracy of its water supply forecasts and establish plans to improve those forecasts.
- Adopt a new water supply forecasting model and implement procedures that address the effects of climate change.
- Implement a formal policy and procedures for documenting DWR's operational plans for the state's water supply. The Department of Water Resources is also required to address the rationale for its operating procedures.
- Develop a comprehensive, long-term plan for mitigating and responding to the effects of drought

PROBLEM

Due to the impacts of climate change, accuracy in modeling is imperative to managing water resources properly. During Water Year 2021, DWR's modeling errors resulted in the excessive release of around 700,000 acre-feet of water from California reservoirs. Billions of gallons of water were released into the Sacramento-San

Joaquin Delta without benefiting humans or wildlife. This loss of water had severe consequences for California due to the significantly lower runoff than anticipated

BACKGROUND

In March 2022, former Assemblymember Gray submitted a letter requesting an audit of the Department of Water Resources investigating the management and administration of surface water. This audit included investigations into the accuracy of data collection, predictive models, and procedures used by the state. The findings of the audit can help ensure forecast modeling mistakes are avoided in future water years. In addition, improved transparency by the DWR may offer clarity and a better understanding of the policies it implements.

SOLUTION

SB 231 requires DWR to update its policies and procedures to better combat the impacts of climate change. The bill also requires DWR to document and address the decisions behind its water operating decisions. Accurate water data collection, planning, and accountability will ensure water stays a vital resource for the public for generations to come.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Harrison Pardini, Legislative Aide
Harrison.Pardini@sen.ca.gov
(916) 651-4016

Senate Bill 265
The Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity Preparedness Act
As Amended June 19, 2023

SUMMARY

SB 265 takes action to combat the growing issue of cyber threats and cyberattacks by directing the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal-OES) and the California Cybersecurity Integration Center (Cal-CSIC) to develop outreach and funding plans to improve cybersecurity preparedness in California's critical infrastructure sectors.

PROBLEM

Recent reports regarding various cybersecurity attacks in the education, health care, energy, and financial sectors have demonstrated that California's critical infrastructure sectors are vulnerable to attack and suffer from a stark lack of cybersecurity preparedness.

Research has shown an increase in the number of cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure sectors. These cyberattacks are predominantly made up of phishing attempts and ransomware.

In December 2022, the California Department of Finance, itself, was hit by a cybersecurity threat that took several days to control. And, in September 2022, the Los Angeles Unified School District experienced a cybersecurity attack where attackers threatened to release highly confidential information.

This lack of preparedness threatens California's economy and the livelihood of those who rely on these sectors. Unless at-risk companies and systems begin to prioritize their cybersecurity, any cyber threats they face will have the potential to harm not only California's economy, but also the well-being of individual Californians.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, Governor Brown signed legislation which defined and established the California Cybersecurity Integration Center (Cal-CSIC). Cal-CSIC operates under the Office of Emergency Services (Cal-OES), and is responsible for planning California's cybersecurity strategy and coordinating with both federal and state government entities to execute that strategy. Cal-CSIC continues to build California's cybersecurity strategy, and work with individual state departments to ensure individual infrastructure sectors have cybersecurity policies and protocols.

In 2022, Governor Newsom signed similar legislation which requires Cal-OES to direct the California Cybersecurity Integration Center (Cal-CSIC) to prepare a multi-year outreach plan to assist the agriculture and water industries specifically in efforts to improve cybersecurity, and options for providing grants and other support to improve cybersecurity preparedness.

SOLUTION

SB 265 expands on previous work by requiring Cal-OES and Cal-CSIC to develop cybersecurity preparedness plans for California's critical infrastructure sectors. The plans must include a strategic, multiyear outreach strategy focusing on methods for coordinating with other state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and associations that provide cybersecurity services or resources in the critical infrastructure sector, as well as plans outlining the funding options necessary to achieve this outreach.

State Fire Training Accessibility Act

Introduced, February 15, 2023

SUMMARY

SB 577 allows the State Fire Marshal to accept additional funding sources for the California Fire Service Training and Education Program. The bill would make the same change relative to the California Fire and Arson Training Act. Permitting the State Fire Marshall to receive additional funding sources for training programs will help to mitigate rising fees for those seeking fire training certification.

PROBLEM

California State Fire Training (SFT) provides curriculum and certification to current fire department, firefighters, and individuals seeking a career in the fire service. These courses meet or exceed National Fire Protection Association and National Wildfire Coordination Group standards. This training is provided to over 23,000 paid and volunteer firefighters every year.

When SFT was established, it only allowed for user fees to recover the cost of staff, course development and certification. Over the years the fire service has become more professional and certifications are now required for every position in the fire service. To generate enough revenue, fees needed to be raised by over 200% and in some cases 400%. This has resulted in courses and certification becoming unaffordable to volunteer firefighters and individuals seeking entry level positions.

BACKGROUND

The California Fire Service Training and Education) Division under the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal provides an essential need for a diverse California fire service. It is responsible for rules and regulations, course development, oversight of course delivery, certification, instructor registration, evaluator registration, and certification testing. This division is vital to the fire service because it provides the course curriculum for over 160 different courses and 26 certification levels, including some nationally accredited certifications.

In the era of climate change, the fire service is regularly responding to mass conflagration wildfires and the need for well-trained fire personnel has never been greater. Central to achieving this goal is making SFT courses both accessible and affordable to all fire personnel, especially the next generation of firefighters. Historically, SFT has been able to provide these services at a minimal cost to its users. However, doing so in an increasingly complex and expanding arena of fire protection has resulted in funding shortfalls, requiring a significant increase in their fees.

Solution

SB 577 allows the State Fire Marshal to accept additional funding sources for the California Fire Service Training and Education Program. The bill would make the same change relative to the California Fire and Arson Training Act. Given the enormous risk of fire and other disasters that face California, we must make SFT an affordable solution for our paid and volunteer firefighters,

as well as students wishing to enter the fire service. Permitting the State Fire Marshall to receive additional funding sources for training programs will help to mitigate rising fees for those seeking fire training certification. The financial obstacles the fee increases have created for students and fire departments demands a legislative solution.

2023–24 Budget Wins

\$5M for the City of McFarland for a new police station

\$1M for the City of Hanford for Hanford Fire Department to purchase fire engines

\$1M for the City of Avenal for public safety equipment & roof repairs of the police department & Veterans Hall

\$1M for the City of Tulare for Tulare Fire Department fire engine replacement

\$5M to the City of Wasco Police Department, for the City of Wasco Police Station

\$350,000 for the City of Kingsburg for a new fire ladder truck

\$350,000 for the City of Orange Cove for a planning study for a new fire station

\$1M for the County of Tulare for road paving in unincorporated communities

\$1M to Kings Community Action Organization Food Bank and Housing

\$10.5M for the Fentanyl Addiction & Overdose Prevention Task Force in Kern County

\$500,000 to the County of Kern – Kern Behavioral Health & Recovery Services, for the Kern County Fentanyl Awareness Campaign

\$500,000 to the County of Tulare, for the Tulare County Homeless Housing

