

AB 624 – Community Relief Act

SUMMARY

AB 624 will establish a grant program to provide financial assistance to local agencies, community-based organizations and individuals for disaster-related costs.

EXISTING LAW

The California Emergency Services Act established the Office of Emergency Services (OES) within the office of the governor. OES has many areas of responsibility, including the duty to prevent, respond to and recover from natural, technological, or manmade disasters and emergencies.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUE

California has continually experienced devastating and destructive wildfires over the last decade. In fact, wildfires have been particularly devastating in recent years and appear to be getting worse. According to data from CalFire, fourteen of the twenty most destructive wildfires and thirteen of the twenty largest wildfires in California history have occurred in the last 10 years. Additionally, the state has experienced some of its most deadly wildfires in recent years, with nine of the twenty most deadly wildfires in California's history occurring in the past decade. For example, the Camp Fire in 2018 claimed 85 lives and the fires in Eaton and Palisades this year claiming a total of 29 lives.

A critical aspect of the state's continued responsibility to address the destruction wrought by wildfires is providing adequate resources and funding for communities to recover. Unfortunately, with insurance companies fleeing the state and families already struggling with inflation, oftentimes the road to recovery following a wildfire can be a traumatic and exceedingly difficult circumstance.

While OES has continued to deliver critical assistance to Californians in the midst of

wildfires and during recovery efforts, it is crucial to provide more financial assistance to local agencies and individuals.

SOLUTION

The Community Relief Act is a common sense solution to ensure that our local agencies and organizations have the necessary funding and resources they require in order to recover from the devastating wildfires that face California annually. Local community organizations and agencies are at the forefront of wildfire relief efforts, providing shelter, safety updates, evacuation instructions and supplies to affected individuals.

Specifically, AB 624 would require that OES award local agencies the maximum local share of federal grant funding received from the Emergency management Performance Grant Program (EMPG). This bill would also establish Article 4.5, the Community Relief Act (CRA). The CRA would instruct the director of OES to provide financial assistance to fire victims from the Disaster Assistance Fund.

By maintaining oversight and local control, while also allocating desperately needed money for local agencies' recovery efforts, AB 624 will bolster California's wildfire preparedness while also supporting victims of devastating fires.

SUPPORT

None on File.

OPPOSITION

None on File.

CO-AUTHORS

None on File.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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