

Introduced by Senator Dodd

January 6, 2021

An act to add Section 8586.8 to the Government Code, relating to emergency services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 109, as introduced, Dodd. Office of Emergency Services: Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development.

Existing law, the California Emergency Services Act, establishes, within the office of the Governor, the Office of Emergency Services, under the direction of the Director of Emergency Services for the purpose of mitigating the effects of natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies.

This bill would establish the Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development within the Office of Emergency Services under the direct control of the Director of the Office of Emergency Services. The bill would make the office responsible for studying, testing, and advising regarding procurement of emerging technologies and tools in order to more effectively prevent and suppress wildfires, and serving as the central organizing hub for the state government's identification of emerging wildfire technologies, as provided.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:

1 (a) Catastrophic wildfires pose an urgent threat to lives, property,
2 and resources in California.

3 (b) Seventeen of the 20 largest wildfires in California history
4 have occurred since 2000, and six of the seven largest wildfires
5 occurred in 2020 alone.

6 (c) The escalating frequency and devastation caused by wildfires
7 demand ongoing research and development of emerging wildfire
8 technologies and tools to prevent, monitor, identify, and suppress
9 wildfires developed by public, private, and nonprofit entities in
10 order to protect lives and property from the effects of wildfires.

11 SEC. 2. Section 8586.8 is added to the Government Code, to
12 read:

13 8586.8. (a) For purposes of this section, “office” means the
14 Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development.

15 (b) The Office of Wildfire Technology Research and
16 Development is hereby established in state government within the
17 Office of Emergency Services to study, test, and advise regarding
18 procurement of emerging technologies and tools in order to more
19 effectively prevent and suppress wildfires within the state. The
20 office shall serve as the central organizing hub for the state
21 government’s identification of emerging wildfire technologies.

22 (c) The office shall be under the direct control of the director.

23 (d) The office shall undertake, but is not limited to, the following
24 activities:

25 (1) Develop a balanced, multimodal research and development
26 program designed to identify, research, and test emerging
27 technologies and tools designed to prevent and suppress wildfires.

28 (2) Work with public, private, and nonprofit entities in
29 identifying new technologies and tools.

30 (3) Make recommendations to state and local agencies on the
31 most effective and useful technologies and tools for procurement.