March 6, 2020



CAL FIRE Grant Program CEQA Overview

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CAL FIRE



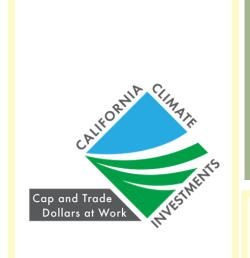
Overview

California Climate Investments – Background

Program Objectives

CEQAs Roll

Project Administration





California Climate Investments

The 2018-2019 budget allocated \$160 million to CAL FIRE CCI Programs:

 Forest Health, Forest Legacy, and Fire Prevention grants, CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program Research specific grants.

The 2019-2020 budget allocated \$165 million to support these programs.





The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF)

- Cap-and-Trade Program began in 2012
- Market-based regulation
- Companies must hold enough emission allowances to cover their emissions and can buy/sell allowances on the open market
- Allowances sold at quarterly auctions and reserve sales
- Proceeds go into the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF)
- Legislature & Governor appropriate GGRF funds for projects that meet the goals of AB 32



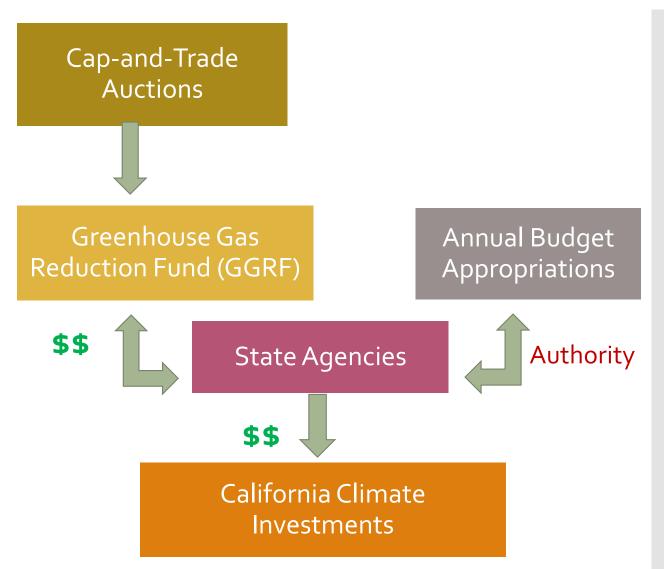
AB 32 The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

- Requires California to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020
- Helps mitigate risks associated with climate change, while improving energy efficiency, expanding use of renewable energy resources & cleaner transportation, & reducing waste
- Regulatory & market-based programs
- California Air Resources Board is the lead agency
- For more information: http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/ab32/ab32.htm



California Climate Investments





Forest Health Program

Activities



Priority projects will implement a mix of these activities:

- Forest fuels reduction
- Prescribed fire
- Pest management
- Reforestation
- Biomass utilization
- Research
- Conservation Forest Legacy

Fire Prevention Program

Activities

Priority projects will implement a mix of these activities:

- Forest fuels reduction
- Fire prevention planning
- Fire prevention education



California Forest Legacy Program



- Protect environmentally important forestland threatened with conversion to nonforest uses
- Ensure CA forests remain a carbon storage sink
- Conservation easements or fee title



Forest Health

Research Program



- Stand-alone research in support of goals of Forest Carbon Plan
- Identify outstanding questions, prioritize needs, and fund sound scientific studies
- Support forest landowners, resource agencies, and fire management organizations in California

Researchonly projects

	Project Type	Budget %	Expected Number of Awards
1	Projects on any land in CA relevant to the Forest Carbon Plan	50%	2-6
2	Projects on Demonstration State Forests	40%	2-5
3	Graduate student projects	10%	2-5



Environmental Compliance



- If applicant is a public agency, they will assume the role of lead agency.
- If the applicant is not a public agency, CAL FIRE will assume the role of lead agency.
- Project work completed on Federal lands must comply with NEPA.

CEQA



CEQA applies to governmental action that may affect the environment. This includes actions that an agency:

- Carries out.
- Supports.
- Issues a permit (for a private activity).







 Grantee must submit proof of California Environmental Quality Act and/or National Environmental Policy Act compliance within <u>one</u> <u>year</u> of the execution of the grant agreement.

CEQA How?



- 1. Notice of exemption (NOE) filed with the State Clearinghouse or the county clerk.
- 2. Initial study and negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration and all associated noticing documents filed with the State Clearinghouse or the county clerk.
- 3. Draft and final environmental impact report and all associated noticing documents filed with the State Clearinghouse or the countyclerk.



- 4. Timber harvesting permit or notice in compliance with the California Forest Practice Act and Rules for projects that undertake timber operations per Public Resources Code § 4527.
- 5. Finding of no significant impact-decision notice, categorical exclusion-decision memo or environmental impact statement-record of decision prepared in compliance with the National Environmental PolicyAct for projects that are exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code § 4799.05(b).
- 6. Certification that the project qualifies for the limited suspension of requirements of CEQA pursuant to the Governor's October 30, 2015, Proclamation of a State of Emergency. Pursuant to paragraph 15 of the Governor's October 30, 2015, Proclamation of a State of Emergency, CAL FIRE, in its sole discretion, must concur with the certification by the Grantee.



<u>Statutory Exemptions</u> – granted by legislature

- Preventing and mitigating an emergency.
- Ministerial projects.
- Others.

<u>Categorical Exemptions</u> – 33 classes

 These classes of activities do not have a significant effect on the environment.

14 CCR § 15063



If the activity is subject to CEQA and not exempt, the lead agency will conduct an initial study. The <u>initial study</u>:

- Is based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G.
- May be prepared by the lead agency, project proponent, or contractor.
- Considers all aspects of the project (planning, implementation, operation).
- Determines if a significant effect on the environment will occur.
- Determines if the project needs modification.
- Determines the type of environmental document.

14 CCR § 15063



If the **results** of the **initial study** show the project:

- Will not have a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency prepares a negative declaration.
- Will have a significant effect on the environment, but mitigation will lessen the effect to a less-thansignificant level, the lead agency prepares a mitigated negative declaration.
- Will have a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency prepares an environmental impact report.

14 CCR § 15063(b)



- For exempt projects where the grantee is a public agency, the grantee will be responsible for:
 - (a) preparing the Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project and notice of exemption; and
 - (b) filing the notice of exemption.



- For non-exempt projects where the grantee is a public agency, the grantee will assume the role of lead agency. The lead agency is responsible for:
 - (a) performing the necessary environmental effects analysis;
 - (b) preparing environmental documents; and
 - (c) filing associated notices.



• When CAL FIRE is the lead agency, the grantee must work closely with the department to ensure the environmental documents reflect its independent judgement.



 For all environmental documents where CAL FIRE is the lead agency, except timber harvesting permits or notices, cultural resources must be assessed per the procedures outlined in **Archaeological Review** Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects, which is available on the CAL FIRE Archaeology Program's website

https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/resourcemanagement/resource-protectionimprovement/environmental-protectionprogram/archaeology-program/



What are the options to pursue any of these approaches?

- City Planning Dept.
- County Planning Dept.
- USFS Office
- CAL FIRE Unit
 - VMP, NOE, CalVTP, CFIP.

Project Administration Reminder



- Eligible & ineligible costs
 - Meeting CEQA is an eligible cost to add to the grants.
- Payment of grant funds advances







GRANT UPDATES

Get Updates on CAL FIRE's Grant Programs

http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/grants

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