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Senate Bill 1241 Agriculture Climate Benefits Act *By Senator Lois Wolk*

Bill Summary

SB 1241 directs a portion of funds generated from state or federal climate change programs to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to support voluntary greenhouse gas emission reductions in California agriculture.

Background and Analysis

AB 32 recognizes that climate change will have detrimental effects on some of the state's largest industries, including agriculture. Much is at stake – California agriculture contributes \$37 billion annually to California's economy and supplies more than half of the country's fruit and vegetables.

In a state where water is already scarce, climate change scenarios predict that water supplies will become increasingly constrained. Warming temperatures also threaten to shift the kinds of crops that can be grown in the state. These and other predicted climate changes could severely strain important agricultural industries.

Although California agriculture will be impacted by climate change, it also can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the objectives of AB 32. Research funded by the California Energy Commission suggests that some agricultural practices not only reduce GHGs, but may also sequester atmospheric carbon in the soil. Investing in the following efforts will support agriculture's contribution to climate change mitigation and increase its resilience:

1. Research and demonstration to examine the farming practices and systems that reduce GHGs and sequester atmospheric carbon.
2. Technical assistance that communicates research findings into real opportunities for California agriculture to provide voluntary GHG reductions.
3. Incentives for agricultural practices to overcome barriers to practices that mitigate climate change and offer environmental co-benefits, including improved air and water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat and water conservation.

SB 1241 will require that if funds are generated by state or federal climate change programs, a portion of the funds are applied to research and demonstration, technical assistance and financial incentives for voluntary greenhouse gas emission reductions and carbon sequestration in California agriculture. CDFA will administer SB 1241 with input from an Advisory Committee comprised of agricultural producers, researchers and non-profit organizations with expertise in agriculture and climate change.

SB 1241 will help meet the objectives of AB 32 and help address the climate change challenges faced by California agriculture.

Support

Agriculture and Climate Coalition (sponsor)
Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association
California Certified Organic Farmers
Center for Food Safety
Community Alliance with Family Farmers
Dixon Ridge Farms
Earthbound Farm
Ecological Farming Association
Full Belly Farm
Hedgerow Farms
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center
Pesticide Action Network North America
Rominger Brothers Farms, Inc.
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Sustainable Agriculture Education
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