

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources Agency consists of 27 departments, boards, commissions, and conservancies responsible for administering programs to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance the natural and cultural resources of California, including:

- Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
- Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks)
- Department of Water Resources
- Department of Fish and Game
- Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission

The Governor's Budget proposes \$10.2 billion (\$2.1 billion General Fund) and 17,764.3 positions for the Natural Resources Agency. Significant General Fund expenditures include:

- \$976.6 million for debt service costs on various natural resources general obligation bonds.
- \$685.1 million for CAL FIRE to provide fire protection services in wildland areas of the state.
- \$119.0 million for Parks to operate the state park system.

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

CAL FIRE provides wildland fire protection services covering over 31 million acres of the state. CAL FIRE operates 228 fire stations, and on average responds to over 5,600 wildfires annually. CAL FIRE also performs the functions of a local fire department and first emergency responder through reimbursement agreements with local governments. Other responsibilities include the development and enforcement of fire safety standards through the State Fire Marshal, and the regulation and enforcement of timber harvesting operations.

The significant General Fund solutions are as follows:

- Eliminate Funding for CAL FIRE’s Fourth Firefighter—A decrease of \$3.6 million in 2010-11 and a decrease of \$30.7 million in 2011-12 as a result of restoring CAL FIRE’s staffing levels to three firefighters per engine. Beginning in 2003, CAL FIRE increased staffing levels from three to four firefighters per engine during peak fire season in the summer and early fall. However, these additional staffing levels have not measurably changed CAL FIRE’s initial attack effectiveness. Since 2003, CAL FIRE has contained 92.2 percent of wildfires to less than ten acres. This wildfire containment rate is similar to CAL FIRE’s historic trends. The Budget will restore CAL FIRE firefighter staffing back to its pre-2003 levels.
- Realignment of Fire Protection Services—The Budget proposes to realign fire protection services in the most highly populated state responsibility areas to local governments. Please see the Realignment Chapter for additional information.

The significant General Fund workload adjustments are as follows:

- Fire Protection Program Permanent Funding—A continuation of \$42.7 million and 69.6 positions in 2011-12 for CAL FIRE’s aviation program, the Lake Tahoe fire station, and other fire protection activities. Chapter 718, Statutes of 2010, requires CAL FIRE to submit a zero-base budget for all activities previously funded from the Emergency Fund. The Budget will continue to fund CAL FIRE’s existing fire protection programs, except to reinstate the three-firefighter-per engine staffing as mentioned above.
- Unemployment Insurance—An increase of \$10.6 million in 2010-11 and 2011-12 to fund additional unemployment insurance claims for seasonal firefighters. Recent federal extensions have increased the amount of time seasonal firefighters are eligible for unemployment benefits.

The significant General Fund policy issue adjustment is:

- Civil Cost Recovery Program—An increase of \$1.7 million and 9 positions in 2011-12 to investigate and pursue cost recoveries for wildfires caused by negligence or illegal activity. Over the past several years, the Budget Act has provided additional positions for CAL FIRE to pursue cost recoveries. As a result, CAL FIRE's cost recoveries have increased by over \$10 million annually. CAL FIRE estimates an additional 9 positions would generate \$6.8 million annually, resulting in a net General Fund savings of approximately \$5.1 million.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The Department operates the state park system to preserve and protect the state's most valued natural, cultural and historical resources and to create opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The state park system consists of 278 parks encompassing over 1.3 million acres, 320 miles of coast-line, 13,863 campsites, and 4,225 miles of trails. The Department also administers several grant programs to provide funding for local and regional parks.

The significant General Fund solutions are as follows:

- Reduction to State Parks—A decrease of \$11.0 million in 2011-12 which will result in partially or fully closing some state park units and reducing expenditures at the Department's headquarters. The plan, when completed, will minimize the impact on attendance by partially closing state parks during weekdays and off-peak seasons and closing other parks with the lowest attendance and revenue generation. The Department also will consider other factors including unit operating costs, the ability to physically close a unit, the ability to actually realize net savings from closing a unit, and the existence of major concessions. The Department will work with stakeholders and local communities to explore partnership opportunities. When fully implemented, the closures and transfers will produce \$22.0 million in ongoing General Fund savings.

The significant General Fund workload adjustment is:

- Restoration of One-Time Reduction—An increase of \$7.0 million to restore a one-time budget reduction included in the 2010 Budget Act.

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