



BILL ESSAYLI

63RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 397 – Wildfire Emissions Reporting

SUMMARY

AB 397 would require the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to include greenhouse gas emissions from wildlands and forest fires in its scoping plan.

BACKGROUND

AB 32 (2006) required CARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to reduce GHGs to achieve the goal of reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The Scoping Plan was first approved by CARB in 2008 and must be updated at least every five years. Since 2008, there have been two updates to the Scoping Plan. Each of the Scoping Plans have included a suite of policies to help the State achieve its GHG targets, in large part leveraging existing programs whose primary goal is to reduce harmful air pollution.

ISSUE

According to a new study led by University of California researchers and published in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Pollution*, which

found that wildfires in 2020 — California's worst wildfire year on record — resulted in more than double the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions slashed by the state from 2003 to 2019. In other words, "Wildfire emissions in 2020 essentially negate 18 years of reduction in greenhouse gas emission," said Dr. Michael Jewitt, a UCLA Fielding School of Public Health professor of environmental health sciences and a lead author of the research, in a statement. (SF Chronicle)

THE BILL

California is in the process of drafting an updated scoping plan, which outlines a number of strategies to combat climate change and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. However, given the risk of emission impacts from wildfires, CARB cannot afford to ignore emissions from wildfires in its scoping plan.

AB 397 would require CARB to include GHG emissions from wildlands and forest fires in its scoping plan. Since forest fires are the source of an enormous amount of GHG emissions,



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this proposal will help us understand the impact of future wildland fires, which will hopefully lead to reduced GHGs and other toxic pollutants.

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