State Senate Bill 45, which would provide $5.5 billion in bond funding to help California become more resilient to climate change, passed the Senate Natural Resources Committee Tuesday.

“We now have eternal fire seasons, water shortages and increased drought, more severe flooding, and increased numbers of extreme heat days that put our residents and our infrastructure at risk,” state Sen. Anthony Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge), one of the bill’s authors, said in a prepared statement.

“These events are already costing California billions of dollars every year. We must take bold action now to fund solutions to reduce these effects and adopt the necessary preventative measures to protect vulnerable communities and our natural resources,” Portantino said.
California’s 4th Climate Assessment, prepared by the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Energy Commission, and the California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, has determined the cost of climate change for California alone could be more than $113 billion annually by 2050.

The assessment found that these costs will only compound if the state does not take action now to reduce the risk of climate change impacts, such as more severe wildfires, prolonged drought, and deadly floods.

SB 45, or the Wildfire, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022, proposes a general obligation bond to provide much-needed revenue to address these impacts.

The measure proposes funds to reduce fire risk and restore areas that are already damaged; restore and protect impacted wetlands, watersheds, and waterways; reduce impacts on vulnerable populations; and improve the resiliency of water supplies and agricultural lands.

Wildfires are increasingly occurring every year. Some experts say the intense wildfires, coupled with a devastating multi-year drought, demonstrates that the impacts of climate change are being felt and already costing California billions of dollars every year.

Supporters of SB 45 include the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, the Big Sur Land Trust, the California Coastkeeper Alliance, the California Invasive Plant Council, Marin County, Sacramento County, the Eastern Sierra Land Trust, Friends of Desert Mountains, the Surfrider Foundation, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Nature Conservancy, Outdoor Alliance California, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, Placer County Water Agency, the Planning and Conservation League, Safe Agriculture Safe Schools, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, the Smith River Alliance, the Sonoma Water, Transition Habitat Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, the Western Rivers Conservancy, Wholly H2o, and the Wildlands Conservancy.
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