

Governor’s Budget Plan Getting High Marks from Environmentalists

Molly Samuel, KQED Science | January 9, 2014 | 2 Comments

Environmental groups are generally lauding [Governor Jerry Brown’s proposed budget](#), which includes an outline for spending revenue from the state’s carbon auctions.

The [cap-and-trade program](#) charges companies for the right to pollute. Fees are then supposed to be used for programs aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions and to shield consumers from any hikes in their electric bill caused by the regulation. Brown’s budget proposes how to spend \$850 million from the program:

A quarter of the revenue is required to go towards helping

Figure EPA-01
Cap and Trade Expenditure Plan
(Dollars in Millions)

<i>Investment Category</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Sustainable Communities and Clean Transportation	High-Speed Rail Authority/ Caltrans	Rail Modernization	\$300
	Strategic Growth Council	Sustainable Communities	\$100
	Air Resources Board	Low Carbon Transportation	\$200
Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy	Department of Community Services and Development	Energy Efficiency Upgrades/Weatherization	\$80
	Department of General Services	Green State Buildings	\$20
	Department of Food and Agriculture	Agricultural Energy and Operational Efficiency	\$20
	Department of Water Resources	Water Action Plan - Water and Energy Efficiency	\$20
Natural Resources and Waste Diversion	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Water Action Plan - Wetlands and Watershed Restoration	\$30
	Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	Fire Prevention and Urban Forestry Projects	\$50
	Cal Recycle	Waste Diversion	\$30
Total			\$850

(Source: Governor’s Full Budget Summary)

environmentally disadvantaged areas, with one tenth invested within those communities.

“The most vulnerable to climate change are those who are low-income and communities of color,” said Mari Rose Taruc with the [Asian Pacific Environmental Network](#). “A few of the priority investment areas include energy efficiency for low-income homes. It includes affordable transit-oriented development as part of a broader sustainable communities strategy, as well as urban forestry.”

Last year, the governor outraged environmentalists by [“borrowing” cap-and-trade revenues](#) to balance the general fund. This year’s budget includes \$100 million being repaid from that loan, plus \$750 million in expected revenue from the program.

The overall budget picture is rosier than in years past, as KQED's Sacramento bureau chief [Scott Detrow](#) explains.

Brace yourself, Californians: There's no state budget crisis this year. Repeat: No crisis.

Gov. Jerry Brown didn't actually say those exact words this morning as he unveiled [his spending plan](#) for the next fiscal year, but he did sound a rare note of budget optimism. "For this year, there is very good news," Brown said. "Good news in the fiscal stability and resources available for the state of California."

Other environmental budget items include \$785,000 for [Proposition 65 reform](#); \$655 million for state parks, including \$40 million to catch up on deferred maintenance; \$6.7 million for oil spill prevention and response, with an eye toward the expected increase in shipments of [crude oil by rail](#); and \$618 million for water-related spending, including conservation, infrastructure, flood prevention, drinking water and habitat restoration

When asked in a press conference this morning about more immediate water concerns in this [very dry year](#), Brown said he'll do everything "humanly possible" to address water resources, but added, "Governors can't make it rain."

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