

Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel

November 2025



Photo Courtesy of CA Grown

Changes to the Cannella Environmental Farming Act



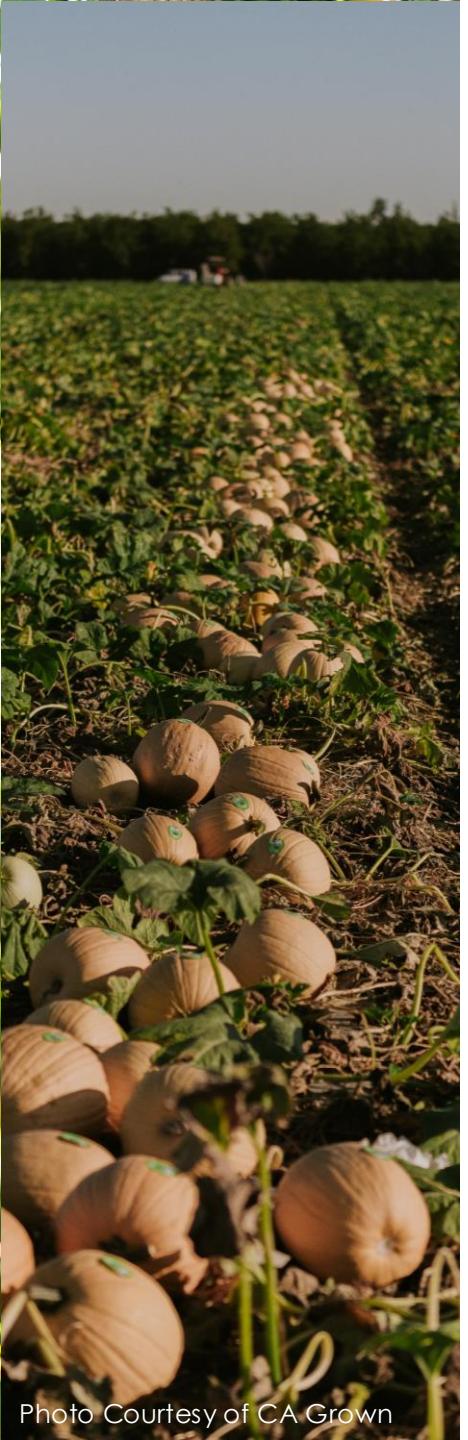
AB 947 (Connolly, 2025)

- Goes into effect on January 1, 2026
- Updates the Food an Agricultural Code Sections 564, 566, 568, 569 and 570 (collectively known as the Canella Environmental Farming Act of 1995)
- Supported by 13 agricultural organizations and opposed by none
- Makes changes to the Panel as well as the Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance (CSATA) program



Amendments Made to the Panel

- Updates and clarifies language
 - Environmental Farming → Sustainable Agriculture
 - Wildlife and their Habitat → Biodiversity
 - Explicitly incorporates climate impacts and goals
 - Explicitly calls for an analysis on the impact of communities, in addition to the environment
 - Incorporates “resilience” as part of sustainability
- Renames the panel as the *Scientific Advisory Panel on Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture (SAPRSA)*
- Clarifies the scope of CDFA’s sustainable agriculture programming to include not just incentives, but also research and technical assistance



Amendments Made to the Panel

- Tasks the Panel with synthesis of scientific evidence, not just compilation
- Expands the Panel to 11, adding two more CDFA Secretary-appointed members, specifically two additional members with scientific training
- Requires that two members be producers, up from the one required organic producer
- Implements term limits: 3-year terms, maximum of 2 terms



Amendments Made to CSATA

- Allows for the program to clearly accommodate Block Grantee- mediated technical assistance
- Broadens the definition of allowable TA expenses
 - TA no longer strictly limited to grant program assistance
 - Allows for lease, purchase and repair of equipment
 - Allows funding for training, convening and capacity building
- Simplifies and fixes some of the language about funding limits per TA provider



Photo Courtesy of CA Grown

Climate Bond Funding for HSP and SWEEP



What we know now:

- Without an APA exemption or mitigating regulations in the Food and Ag Code, the Legislature state agencies to promulgate regulations for each grant program
- Everything that is a requirement in the grant program must go into the regulations, from policies to forms, meaning that the cost of fixing mistakes later is high
- As the lead agency on the Bond, CNRA is working diligently to provide guidance and training to other agencies in collaboration with the Office of Administrative Law
- CDFA has limited staff and legal expertise and capacity in writing regulations
- Once submitted, CDFA staff must be on-call for OAL during the 10-day review period and there may be back and forth



What this means for timing:

- We have a draft Request for Grant Applications ready for public comment
- However, because of the APA, we also must have the Grant Award Procedures (GAP) Manual ready at the same time for public comment
- We anticipate an early 2026 release of both documents for comment, but the timeline to develop regulations is less certain because of capacity