

# SB 246 (Wieckowski) – Amended April 14, 2015

## Climate Action Team

### SUMMARY

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Currently, the state lacks a coordinated, comprehensive approach for adapting to the impacts of climate change. SB 246 establishes the Climate Action Team (CAT), a body traditionally tasked with GHG emission reduction efforts, in statute as the coordinating body for the state's climate policy and broadly tasks them with developing and implementing both mitigation and adaptation plans to ensure a comprehensive approach to the state's overall climate strategy.

### BACKGROUND

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Executive Order S-3-05 established the Climate Action Team (CAT), chaired by the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), as the coordinating body of the state's overall climate policy, as noted in the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). Since then, California has been a leader in climate mitigation efforts. However, the state alone cannot prevent global climate change and must prepare for the inevitable impacts through planning and implementing adaptation strategies in addition to mitigation.

State agencies have developed numerous assessment and planning documents to better understand the risks from climate change to California and recommend principles for adaptation, as in the 2014 Safeguarding California report, an update to the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the Adaptation Planning Guide. However, as noted in the 2014 independent report "Governing California Through Climate Change" by the Little Hoover Commission, based on hearings, meetings, and interviews with climate change experts and stakeholders throughout the state, there is a need for a more unified approach to adaptation from the state government.

The necessity for improvements in implementing and coordinating adaptation efforts across the state was further highlighted by representatives for local governments and regional collaboratives during the

Senate Environmental Quality Committee's February 25, 2015 Informational Hearing, "California's Adaptation Efforts to Climate Change Impacts on Environmental Quality and Public Health." Local and regional bodies, partnering with a range of academic, non-profit, and private entities, have been at the forefront of climate adaptation efforts. Given the efforts of regional collaboratives and local governments to plan and implement adaptation projects, improved coordination and communication with state agencies overseeing the state's climate policy is important for developing comprehensive adaptation efforts.

With the CAT's experience coordinating climate change research and assessments, and resiliency and adaptation planning documents, it is well-suited to lead collaborative efforts across state and local governments to coordinate the state's planning, investment, and implementation of adaptation programs and guidelines.

### THIS BILL

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SB 246 establishes the Climate Action Team in statute, comprised of representatives from multiple state agencies and chaired by the Secretary of Cal/EPA. The bill tasks the CAT with coordinating the state's climate policy, including both mitigation and adaptation, the efficient use of state funds relating to climate change, and information to assist local governments and regional bodies in mitigation and adaptation efforts. Additionally, the bill tasks the CAT with coordinating updates to the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy and the Adaptation Planning Guide. This bill also creates an advisory council to provide scientific and technical support, and regional and local perspectives, from a range of disciplines in order to assist the CAT.

### SUPPORT

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Audubon California  
California League of Conservation Voters  
Climate Resolve  
Defenders of Wildlife

Friends of the River  
Local Government Commission  
Public Health Institute's Center for Climate Change &  
Health  
The Nature Conservancy  
Sierra Club California

## **OPPOSITION**

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None on file