A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING A REQUIREMENT THAT THE STATE ENGINEER PROMULGATE RULES THAT ESTABLISH AN OPTIONAL STREAMLINED APPROACH TO CALCULATE THE HISTORICAL CONSUMPTIVE USE OF A WATER RIGHT.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

When a water right owner wishes to change a water right—whether a temporary loan or change approved by the state engineer or a permanent change approved by a water judge—the determination of the amount of...
water that can be loaned or changed relies on a calculation of the historical consumptive use of the water right. The bill directs the state engineer to promulgate rules that take into account local conditions that an applicant can use to calculate historical consumptive use. The results of the calculation carry no presumptive weight before the state engineer, water referee, or water judge.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. (1) During the 2017 interim, the water resources review committee created in section 37-98-102, C.R.S., shall study the issue of whether the state engineer should be given statutory authority to promulgate rules that would:

(a) Adopt a nonbinding, streamlined methodology for determining factors and using other assumptions for calculating the historical consumptive use of a water right;

(b) Provide guidance for all components of an historical consumptive use analysis for a change of water right using geographically specific considerations; and

(c) Ensure that the calculation of the historical consumptive use complies with section 37-92-305 (3), C.R.S.

(2) The goal of the study is to investigate the feasibility, costs, and impacts of providing a nonbinding alternative to other methods of calculating historical consumptive use of a water right that may reduce transaction costs and the time necessary to obtain approval of loans and temporary and permanent changes of water rights while ensuring that no injury results from the approval.

(3) The committee shall consider:

(a) Whether the rules, if authorized, should apply in only particularly identified water divisions and how the rules ought to take into
account division-specific factors;

(b) The potential cost of promulgating the rules; and

(c) How the rules should be paid for.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.