

First Regular Session  
Seventy-third General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 21-0889.01 Thomas Morris x4218

SENATE BILL 21-234

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SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Jaquez Lewis and Sonnenberg,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Cutter and Holtorf,

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Senate Committees

Agriculture & Natural Resources

House Committees

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING CREATION OF THE AGRICULTURE AND DROUGHT  
102 RESILIENCY FUND, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH,  
103 TRANSFERRING MONEY FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE FUND  
104 AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

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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>.)*

The bill creates the agriculture and drought resiliency fund and directs the state treasurer to transfer \$3 million from the general fund to the fund. The department of agriculture will use the fund to engage in

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

activities that promote the ability of the state to anticipate, prepare for, mitigate, adapt to, or respond to any event, trend, or climatological disturbance related to drought or climate. The fund is repealed, effective September 1, 2022.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 35-1-114 as  
3 follows:

4 **35-1-114. Agriculture and drought resilience - cash fund -**  
5 **legislative declaration - repeal.** (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY:

6 (a) FINDS THAT:

7 (I) IN 2020, ALL OF COLORADO WAS IN DROUGHT;

8 (II) MAJOR DRIVERS OF THE SEVERE DROUGHT IN 2020 INCLUDE AN  
9 ESSENTIALLY ABSENT MONSOON SEASON, INCREASED SOIL MOISTURE  
10 DEFICITS, RECORD-HIGH TEMPERATURES, AND EXTREME EVAPORATIVE  
11 DEMANDS FROM WINDS, LOW HUMIDITY, AND HIGH TEMPERATURES; AND

12 (III) A WARM SPRING, DRY SUMMER, AND CRITICALLY HOT  
13 AUTUMN WITH A COMPLETE LACK OF MONSOONAL MOISTURE  
14 CONTRIBUTED TO 2020'S RECORD-BREAKING FIRES;

15 (b) DETERMINES THAT:

16 (I) MULTI-YEAR OR COMPOUNDING HAZARDS, SUCH AS THE 2018  
17 DROUGHT, 2019 FREEZE, 2020 DROUGHT, AND WILDFIRES, TAKE DEEP  
18 ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL TOLLS ON COLORADO'S AGRICULTURE;

19 (II) CLIMATE OUTLOOKS FOR 2021 INDICATE DROUGHT  
20 CONDITIONS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE;

21 (III) MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED STUDIES PUBLISHED SINCE 2013  
22 SHOW STRONG CONSENSUS THAT CLIMATE CHANGE PROMOTES THE  
23 WEATHER CONDITIONS ON WHICH WILDFIRES DEPEND, ENHANCING THEIR

1 LIKELIHOOD AND INCREASING THEIR SEVERITY; AND

2 (IV) BY 2050, DROUGHT MAY COST COLORADO AN ADDITIONAL  
3 FIVE HUNDRED ELEVEN MILLION DOLLARS IN EXPECTED ANNUAL DAMAGES  
4 TO AGRICULTURE; AND

5 (c) DECLARES THAT SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL DROUGHT AND  
6 CLIMATE RESILIENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO A STRONG AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE  
7 FOR AGRICULTURE IN COLORADO.

8 (2) (a) THE AGRICULTURE AND DROUGHT RESILIENCY FUND,  
9 REFERRED TO IN THIS SECTION AS THE "FUND", IS HEREBY CREATED IN THE  
10 STATE TREASURY. THE FUND CONSISTS OF MONEY CREDITED TO THE FUND  
11 PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2)(b) OF THIS SECTION AND ANY OTHER  
12 MONEY THAT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY APPROPRIATE OR TRANSFER  
13 TO THE FUND. THE STATE TREASURER SHALL CREDIT ALL INTEREST AND  
14 INCOME DERIVED FROM THE DEPOSIT AND INVESTMENT OF MONEY IN THE  
15 FUND TO THE FUND.

16 (b) WITHIN THREE DAYS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS  
17 SECTION, THE STATE TREASURER SHALL TRANSFER THREE MILLION  
18 DOLLARS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE FUND.

19 (3) (a) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL COLLABORATE AND COORDINATE  
20 AS NECESSARY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, THE  
21 COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD, AND THE GOVERNOR'S  
22 AGRICULTURAL IMPACT TASK FORCE TO IDENTIFY THE MOST EFFECTIVE  
23 AND EFFICIENT USES OF THE MONEY IN THE FUND.

24 (b) SUBJECT TO ANNUAL APPROPRIATION BY THE GENERAL  
25 ASSEMBLY, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL USE THE MONEY IN THE FUND TO  
26 ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE THE ABILITY OF THE STATE TO  
27 ANTICIPATE, PREPARE FOR, MITIGATE, ADAPT TO, OR RESPOND TO ANY

1 EVENT, TREND, OR CLIMATOLOGICAL DISTURBANCE RELATED TO DROUGHT  
2 OR CLIMATE, INCLUDING:

3 (I) DEVELOPING OR FACILITATING A HAY BANK TO PROVIDE  
4 FARMERS AND RANCHERS WITH ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR LIVESTOCK IN  
5 TIMES OF DROUGHT;

6 (II) PROVIDING FINANCIAL OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH  
7 TRANSPORTING HAY OR LIVESTOCK FEED FROM AREAS OUTSIDE OF  
8 COLORADO;

9 (III) SUPPORTING RECOVERY OF GRAZING LANDS FOLLOWING  
10 WILDFIRE DEVASTATION EXACERBATED BY DROUGHT CONDITIONS; OR

11 (IV) PROVIDING TO PRODUCERS, AS DEFINED BY THE FEDERAL  
12 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP PREPARE  
13 AND PLAN FOR FUTURE OR PERSISTENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS.

14 (4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL INCLUDE UPDATES REGARDING ITS  
15 ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, INCLUDING  
16 EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND, IN ITS DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATION TO  
17 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE PURSUANT TO SECTION 2-7-203.

18 (5) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2022.

19 **SECTION 2. Appropriation.** For the 2020-21 state fiscal year,  
20 \$3,000,000 is appropriated to the department of agriculture for use by the  
21 department. This appropriation is from the general fund. The department  
22 may use this appropriation to implement this act. Any money appropriated  
23 in this section but not expended prior to July 1, 2021, is further  
24 appropriated to the department for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 state fiscal  
25 years for the same purpose.

26 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,

- 1 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
- 2 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.