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Fiscal Note

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Prime Sponsors:

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Bill Status: Bill Request
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Bill Topic: **WATER LITERACY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

- Summary of Fiscal Impact:**
- State Revenue
 - State Expenditure
 - State Transfer
 - TABOR Refund
 - School District
 - Statutory Public Entity

The bill requires that the Colorado Department of Education create a water literacy resource bank. The department must hire a content specialist to oversee the resource bank, and contract with a nonprofit organization to act as the state coordinator. Beginning in FY 2023-24, the bill increases state expenditures on an ongoing basis.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2023-24, the bill requires an appropriation of \$96,170 to the Department of Education.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects bill draft as requested by the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee.

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under Bill 2**

		Budget Year FY 2023-24	Out Year FY 2024-25
Revenue		-	-
Expenditures	General Fund	\$96,170	\$195,443
	Centrally Appropriated	\$15,429	\$19,839
	Total	\$111,599	\$215,282
	Total FTE	0.8 FTE	1.0 FTE
Transfers		-	-
Other Budget Impacts	General Fund Reserve	\$14,426	\$29,316

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires that the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) create and maintain a water literacy resource bank beginning in FY 2023-24. The resource bank must contain curricula, training materials, and other educational resources, assembled with input from state agencies, experts, and nonprofits from within the water industry. The CDE must hire an environmental education content specialist to create and maintain the resource bank, and may contract for water literacy materials and curricula, as well as for educator and school staff training.

By December 1, 2024, the CDE must contract with a nonprofit organization to act as the state coordinator to curate existing water literacy materials, create new materials, and work in coordination with the environmental content specialist at the CDE. Beginning July 1, 2025, the resource bank must be available without charge to the greatest extent possible to public schools and districts. If requested, the CDE must provide free technical assistance in designing age-appropriate water literacy curricula.

Beginning in FY 2025-26, the CDE must partner with educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education and other water education programs to ensure water literacy resources are accessible to schools and districts. Resources may include training programs for educators, age-appropriate educational materials, career opportunities for students, technology to connect students with industry experts, and funding for field trips and experiential opportunities. The CDE is authorized to partner with water conservancy districts, the Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Department of Natural Resources to support learning opportunities for students.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in CDE by \$111,599 in FY 2023-24 and \$215,282 beginning in FY 2024-25 from the General Fund. Other state agencies will incur workload impacts. Expenditures are shown in Table 2 and detailed below.

Table 2
Expenditures Under Bill 2

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Department of Education		
Personal Services	\$70,570	\$94,093
Operating Expenses	\$1,080	\$1,350
Capital Outlay Costs	\$6,670	-
CDE Purchasing	\$17,850	-
Contract with Nonprofit	-	\$100,000
Centrally Appropriated Costs ¹	\$15,429	\$19,839
Total Cost	\$111,599	\$215,282
Total FTE	0.8 FTE	1.0 FTE

¹ Centrally appropriated costs are not included in the bill's appropriation.

Department of Education. Beginning FY 2023-24, the CDE must hire an environmental education content specialist to create and maintain the water literacy resource bank, and coordinate with state agencies, experts, and nonprofit organizations. This fiscal note assumes a September 1 start date, reflects the General Fund pay date shift, and includes standard operating and capital outlay costs.

- *Purchasing.* The CDE will contract with a nonprofit entity, which will require a request for proposals. Assuming 350 hours at a rate of \$51/hour for a purchasing agent, the total one-time cost in FY 2023-24 is \$17,850 and will be funded from the General Fund.
- *Contracting.* Based on previous experience developing resource banks and other similar costs, this fiscal note estimates the cost of contracting with a nonprofit organization to be up to \$100,000 annually beginning in FY 2024-25. Exact costs will be determined through the solicitation process.

Other agencies. The Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Public Health and Environment may incur workload impacts to partner with CDE to support learning opportunities for students. In addition, educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education may have workload impacts to partner with CDE to ensure water literacy resources are accessible to schools and districts. This fiscal note assumes that these workload impacts can be accomplished within existing resources.

Centrally appropriated costs. Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which include employee insurance and supplemental employee retirement payments, are shown in Table 2.

Other Budget Impacts

General Fund Reserve. Under current law, an amount equal to 15 percent of General Fund appropriations must be set aside in the General Fund statutory reserve. Based on this fiscal note, the bill is expected to increase the amount of General Fund held in reserve by the amounts shown in Table 1, which will decrease the amount of General Fund available for other purposes.

School District

If school districts choose to incorporate water literacy curricula and other educational opportunities for students, workload and costs may increase.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2023-24, the bill requires a General Fund appropriation of \$96,170 to the Department of Education.

State and Local Government Contacts

Education
Natural Resources

Higher Education
Public Health and Environment

School Districts