



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

FISCAL NOTE

Drafting Number: LLS 20-0377
Prime Sponsors:

Date: October 28, 2019
Bill Status: Bill Request
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Bill Topic: MODIFY WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

- State Revenue, TABOR Refund, State Expenditure (minimal), Local Government, State Transfer, Statutory Public Entity

The bill modifies the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program by allowing more grant funding to projects located in areas with fewer economic resources; expanding the list of eligible recipients; and extending the repeal date to September 1, 2029.

Appropriation Summary: No appropriation is required.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects the bill draft requested by the Wildfire Matters Review Committee.

Summary of Legislation

The bill makes modifications to the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program in the Department of Higher Education (DHE). Under current law, the grant share of a project cannot exceed 50 percent of the total cost of a project. The bill allows projects to receive up to 75 percent of costs through the grant program if the project is located in an area with fewer economic resources, thereby reducing the applicant's share to 25 percent. Additionally, the bill:

- directs the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to establish rules to administer the grant and criteria by which a project will satisfy the requirement of being in an area with fewer economic resources;
requires that grant funded projects support ongoing maintenance efforts to reduce the threat of large, high-intensity wildfires;
expands the list of eligible recipients to include fire protection districts and nonprofit organizations engaged in firefighting activities; and
extends the grant program repeal date from September 1, 2022, to September 1, 2029.

State Expenditures

The bill increases workload in the CSFS and may affect revenue and expenditures for grant recipients.

DHE. The CSFS is required to define areas with fewer economic resources for purposes of the grant program and to adopt additional rules as necessary to facilitate the program. This work can be accomplished by existing program staff without the need for additional appropriations.

Other state agencies. To the extent that state agency grant recipients are located in areas with fewer economic resources, the reduced cost share requirement may increase grant revenue and correspondingly reduce expenditures. Conversely, by expanding the pool of eligible grant recipients, there may be less funding available to state and local government agencies that are eligible under current law.

Local Governments

As with state agencies described above, to the extent that local government grant recipients are located in areas with fewer economic resources, the reduced cost share requirement may increase grant revenue and correspondingly reduce expenditures.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect August 5, 2020, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 6, 2020, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties
Higher Education
Public Safety

Fire Chiefs
Municipalities
Special Districts

Information Technology
Natural Resources