



Legislative Council Staff
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Fiscal Note

Drafting Number: LLS 24-0419
Prime Sponsors:

Date: October 24, 2023
Bill Status: Bill Request
Fiscal Analyst: Matt Bishop | 303-866-4796
matt.bishop@coleg.gov

Bill Topic: **STUDY BIOCHAR IN WILDFIRE MITIGATION EFFORTS**

Summary of Fiscal Impact:	<input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Government
	<input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Institutions of Higher Education

The bill directs Colorado State University to conduct a study on biochar and its use in wildfire mitigation. It increases state expenditures in FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2024-25, the bill requires an appropriation of \$81,181 to the Department of Higher Education for use by Colorado State University.

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

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under Bill 1

		Budget Year FY 2024-25	Out Year FY 2025-26
Revenue		-	-
Expenditures	General Fund	\$81,181	\$93,140
	Total FTE	0.8 FTE	1.0 FTE
Transfers		-	-
Other Budget Impacts	General Fund Reserve	\$12,177	\$13,971

Summary of Legislation

The bill directs Colorado State University (CSU) to study the use of biochar in wildfire mitigation efforts. Biochar is a type of charcoal produced by burning organic material in a form that resists decay in order to sequester its carbon content. The study must evaluate beneficial uses for biochar, its impacts on forest health, and best practices for creating it. CSU must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by July 1, 2026.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures by about \$81,000 in FY 2024-25 and \$93,000 in FY 2025-26, paid from the General Fund. The Department of Higher Education will allocate the funding for use by CSU, as outlined below.

Institutions of Higher Education

CSU's cost to conduct the biochar study and prepare a report is estimated at the salary and benefits for 1.0 FTE post-doc researcher in FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 only.

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, decreasing the amount of General Fund available for other purposes.

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 2024-25, the bill requires a General Fund appropriation of \$81,181 to the Department of Higher Education for use by the Board of Governors of the Colorado State University System, with 0.8 FTE.

State and Local Government Contacts

Higher Education