



Final Report to the General Assembly

Wildfire Matters Review Committee
December 2023 | Research Publication 802



Wildfire Matters Review Committee

Members of the Committee

Representative Elizabeth Velasco, Chair

Senator Lisa Cutter, Vice Chair

Senator Joann Ginal

Representative Ruby Dickson

Senator Sonya Jaquez Lewis

Representative Mike Lynch

Senator Cleave Simpson

Representative Marc Snyder

Senator Perry Will

Representative Ron Weinberg

Legislative Council Staff

Samantha Falco, Research Analyst

Adam Alemzada, Research Analyst

Clayton Mayfield, Fiscal Analyst

John Armstrong, Fiscal Analyst

Office of Legislative Legal Services

Pierce Lively, Senior Attorney

Jery Payne, Senior Attorney

Josh Schultz, Staff Attorney

Alison Killen, Staff Attorney

December | 2023



COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Rep. Stephen Fenberg, Chair
Rep. Julie McCluskie, Vice Chair
Sen. Robert Rodriguez
Rep. Monica Duran
Sen. Paul Lundeen
Rep. Mike Lynch

STAFF

Natalie Castle, Director
Elizabeth Burger, Deputy Director
Manish Jani, Deputy Director



COMMITTEE

Rep. Judy Amabile
Rep. Ryan Armagost
Sen. James Coleman
Sen. Bob Gardner
Sen. Chris Hansen
Rep. Anthony Hartsook
Rep. Iman Jodeh
Rep. Meghan Lukens
Sen. Cleave Simpson
Sen. Jim Smallwood
Sen. Faith Winter
Rep. Chris deGruy-Kennedy

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ROOM 029 STATE CAPITOL

DENVER, COLORADO 80203-1784

E-mail: lcs.ga@state.co.us

303-866-3521 FAX: 303-866-3855 TDD: 303-866-3472

December 2023

To Members of the Seventy-fourth General Assembly:

Submitted herewith is the final report of the Wildfire Matters Review Committee. This committee was created pursuant to Part 16 of Article 3 of Title 2, Colorado Revised Statutes. The purpose of this committee is to oversee and review prevention, mitigation, public safety, and forest health in regards to wildfire matters in Colorado.

At its meeting on November 15, 2023 the Legislative Council reviewed the report of this committee. A motion to forward this report and the bills therein for consideration in the 2024 session was approved.

Sincerely,

/s/ Senator Stephen Fenberg
Chair

Table of Contents

Committee Charge	1
Committee Activities	1
Forest Health and Recovery Programs.....	1
Collaborative Wildfire Mitigation Efforts.....	2
Disproportionately Affected Communities.....	2
Other Policy Areas	3
Glenwood Springs Field Trip.....	3
Summary of Recommendations	4
Bill A — Study Biochar in Wildfire Mitigation Efforts.....	4
Bill B — Emergency Management Plan Individuals with Animals.....	4
Bill C — Assist Rural Community Wildfire-related Grant App.....	4
Bill D — Local Government Disaster-related Programs.....	4
Bill E — Extend Outreach Campaigns Wildfire Risk Mitigation.....	5
Resource Materials	6
Meetings and Topics Discussed.....	6

The texts of the approved bills are included as Attachments A through E after the list of meetings and topics discussed.

This report is also available online at:

<https://leg.colorado.gov/committees/wildfire-matters-review-committee/2023-regular-session>

Committee Charge

Pursuant to Section 2-3-1602, C.R.S., the Wildfire Matters Review Committee (committee) is charged with reviewing and proposing legislation or other policy changes related to wildfire prevention, mitigation, and related matters, including public safety and forest health issues. Senate Bill 13-082 created the committee and [Senate Bill 18-039](#) extended the repeal date of the committee to September 1, 2025. [Senate Bill 21-012](#) added a requirement for the committee to review policy changes to maximize the utilization of wildland fire services through the inmate disaster relief program.

Committee Activities

The committee held five meetings during the 2023 interim and took one field trip. Briefings and presentations were made by government agencies, special interest groups, and members of the public on a wide range of subjects. The following organizations gave briefings and presentations to the committee:

- Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Prevention and Control;
- Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaboration;
- Department of Natural Resources;
- Colorado State Forest Service;
- Colorado Counties, Inc.;
- University Corporation for Atmospheric Research;
- Colorado Rural Electric Association;
- Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities;
- Department of Public Health and Environment;
- Colorado Forest Health Council;
- Center for Independence;
- Center for People with Disabilities;
- Special District Association;
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;
- Center of Excellence;
- Colorado Division of Insurance;
- Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety; and
- Colorado State Fire Chiefs.

The following sections discuss the committee's activities during the 2023 interim.

Forest Health and Recovery Programs

State and federal wildfire-related programs. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) gave an overview of the current programs related to restoring forest health and mitigating the potential damage of future wildfires. DNR explained that some of the strategies have been effective in wildfire mitigation efforts, such as the removal of biomass from forests. The

Colorado Forest Health Council (CFHC) discussed their administrative recommendations for wildfire mitigation, which included piloting slash removal programs and providing additional funding. The committee discussed potential wildfire mitigation strategies with CFHC, such as the use of biochar.

Wildfire risk awareness. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) updated the committee on the wildfire awareness outreach program created in [Senate Bill 22-007](#). CSFS discussed the need for continued outreach to all Coloradans, especially those living in areas with a high wildfire risk.

Committee recommendations. As a result of its discussions, the committee recommends Bill D, which creates programs for slash and debris removal. The committee also recommends Bill E, which continues the wildfire awareness campaign created by [Senate Bill 22-007](#) through FY 2027-28. Finally, the committee recommends Bill A, which directs Colorado State University to study the efficacy of biochar in wildfire mitigation.

Collaborative Wildfire Mitigation Efforts

County-level wildfire mitigation strategies. Several county commissioners, representing Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI), discussed the strategies used to mitigate wildfires at the local level, which include collaborating with neighboring counties in their mitigation efforts. CCI also emphasized the importance of state and federal grant money to mitigation efforts at the local level.

Cooperation among state government, federal agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. Multiple organizations, including Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaboration (NCFC) and CCI, discussed the importance of effective collaboration between state government programs, federal agencies, and nongovernmental organizations. The committee discussed whether the establishment of standards for wildfire mitigation would bolster collaboration.

Committee recommendations. As a result of its discussions, the committee recommends Bill C, which would provide assistance to rural communities to identify and apply for wildfire-related grants. The committee also considered bill drafts on collaboration incentives between different wildfire mitigation efforts and standards for wildfire mitigation, but these draft bills were not approved by the committee.

Disproportionately Affected Communities

Disability community. The Center for Independence (CFI) and the Center for People with Disabilities (CPWD) discussed the unique challenges that face the disability community during wildfires. These challenges include ineffective warning systems and evacuation procedures. CPWD explained the community-based approach to preparing for wildfire evacuations.

Pet owners. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) discussed its emergency response program used during natural disasters, which entails deploying people into areas where an emergency has occurred to rescue pets and other animals. ASPCA explained

that many emergency shelters do not allow pets, which results in animals being left behind and/or pet owners having to seek shelter elsewhere.

Firefighters. Fire Chief Don Lombardi, West Metro Fire Protection District, discussed Colorado Firefighters Heart, Cancer, and Behavioral Health Benefits Trust (trust), which helps cover the out-of-pocket expenses for firefighter’s cardiac and cancer health treatments. Chief Lombardi explained that most volunteer firefighters are not eligible for payments from the trust.

Committee recommendations. As a result of its discussions, the committee recommends Bill B, which encourages emergency management agencies to address the needs of animal owners in the agency’s emergency management plans. The committee also considered a draft bill on expanding firefighter benefits, but the draft bill was not approved by the committee.

Other Policy Areas

Availability and affordability of insurance. The Colorado Division of Insurance (CDI) and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IIBHS) discussed how wildfires may make it more difficult to obtain insurance in Colorado. CDI explained that the Fair Access to Insurance Requirements program created by [House Bill 23-1288](#) addresses insurance availability, but not affordability. IIBHS explained that access to insurance can be improved if wildfire mitigation efforts are implemented by individual homeowners.

Timber industry growth. CSFS explained that logging certain areas may help with wildfire mitigation. The committee discussed how the growth of the timber industry could be an effective wildfire mitigation strategy.

Committee recommendations. As a result of its discussions, the committee considered a draft bill on incentives to promote the timber industry, but the draft bill was not approved by the committee.

Glenwood Springs Field Trip

The committee took a field trip to the Glenwood Springs area. The trip included:

- Colorado Department of Transportation Hanging Lake Tunnel tour;
- a tour of Lake Christine Fire and affected El Jebel mobile homes;
- community engagement at the Glenwood Springs Library;
- EcoFlights over Lake Christine and Grizzly Creek Burn Scars; and
- a tour of the Center of Excellence.

Summary of Recommendations

As a result of the committee's activities, the committee recommended five bills to the Legislative Council for consideration in the 2024 session. At its meeting on November 15, 2023, the Legislative Council approved the five recommended bills for introduction. The approved bills are described below.

Bill A — Study Biochar in Wildfire Mitigation Efforts

The bill directs Colorado State University 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.

Bill B — Emergency Management Plan Individuals with Animals

Under current law, local emergency management agencies must maintain an emergency management plan with provisions for the preparation, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery from emergencies and disasters. The bill encourages emergency management agencies to address the needs of individuals with animals when amending or adopting emergency management plans.

Bill C — Assist Rural Community Wildfire-related Grant Application

The bill requires that the Rural Opportunity Office in the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) provide technical assistance to rural communities to identify and apply for state and federal grants for wildfire mitigation, prevention, response, or risk management efforts. OEDIT must also maintain a list of government grant programs on its website. Beginning July 1, 2025, OEDIT must make a biennial report to the General Assembly summarizing its work to assist rural communities with grant identification and application.

Bill D — Local Government Disaster-related Programs

The bill creates two programs to support local governments in wildfire risk mitigation:

- First, the bill directs the DNR to create a slash removal pilot program supporting county efforts to remove slash, which is the residue created by wildfire risk mitigation efforts. The department, in consultation with counties that already have slash removal programs, must select counties to participate in the pilot program and provide knowledge and resources to facilitate slash removal.
- Second, the bill directs the Department of Public Safety to provide guidance to local governments to facilitate debris removal following a disaster. This includes negotiating with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, developing standard forms and procedures, and ensuring that local programs are limited to residential, rather than commercial, debris

- removal. The department must publish this guidance on its website and update it as necessary.

Bill E — Extend Outreach Campaigns Wildfire Risk Mitigation

The bill requires the CSFS to continue its enhanced wildfire awareness outreach campaign through FY 2027-28, as well as other outreach efforts to increase awareness of wildfire risk mitigation by residents in the wildland-urban interface. The bill extends the requirement that the state forester report annually on outreach efforts to the General Assembly. Finally, the bill requires that the General Assembly appropriate \$300,000 annually to the Healthy Forests and Vibrant Communities Fund through FY 2027-08 for ongoing wildfire awareness campaigns and outreach efforts.

Resource Materials

Meeting summaries are prepared for each meeting of the committee and contain all handouts provided to the committee. The summaries of meetings and attachments are available at the Division of Archives, 1313 Sherman Street, Denver (303-866-2055). The listing below contains the dates of committee meetings and the topics discussed at those meetings. Meeting summaries are also available on our website at:

<https://leg.colorado.gov/committees/wildfire-matters-review-committee/2023-regular-session>

Meetings and Topics Discussed

July 18, 2023

- Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Prevention and Control presentation
- Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaboration presentation
- Department of Natural Resources presentation
- Colorado State Forest Service presentation
- Colorado Counties, Inc. presentation
- Public testimony
- Committee discussion on next steps

August 29, 2023

- University Corporation for Atmospheric Research presentation
- Colorado Rural Electric Association presentation
- Colorado Association of Municipal Utilities presentation
- Department of Public Health and Environment & Department of Public Safety presentation
- Colorado Forest Health Council presentation
- Center for Independence presentation
- Center for People with Disabilities presentation
- Special District Association presentation
- American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals presentation
- Public testimony

September 19, 2023

- Colorado Division of Insurance presentation
- Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety presentation
- Colorado State Forest Service update on Senate Bill 22-007
- Colorado State Fire Chiefs presentation
- Public testimony
- Draft bill requests

November 1, 2023

- Discussion of bill drafts
- Public testimony
- Final action on bill draft requests

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

Bill A

LLS NO. 24-0419.01 Josh Schultz x5486

SENATE BILL

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cutter and Will, Jaquez Lewis, Ginal

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Dickson and Velasco, Snyder

Senate Committees

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON BIOCHAR, AND, IN**
 102 **CONNECTION THEREWITH, STUDYING THE USE OF BIOCHAR IN**
 103 **WILDFIRE MITIGATION EFFORTS.**

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/>.)

Wildfire Matters Review Committee. The bill directs the board of governors of the Colorado state university system (board) to conduct, or cause to be conducted, a comprehensive study on biochar, including its use in wildfire mitigation efforts. The bill specifies minimum topics that the study must include. The board is required to submit a report on the

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

findings of the study to specified committees of the general assembly.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-31-209 as
3 follows:

4 **23-31-209. Comprehensive study on biochar - report -**
5 **definitions - repeal.** (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT
6 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

7 (a) "BIOCHAR" MEANS THE SOLID, CARBON-RICH PRODUCT MADE
8 WHEN BIOMASS UNDERGOES PYROLYSIS IN AN OXYGEN-DEPLETED
9 ATMOSPHERE IN A PROCESS THAT SEQUESTERS CARBON.

10 (b) "BIOMASS" MEANS:

11 (I) NONTOXIC PLANT MATTER CONSISTING OF AGRICULTURAL
12 CROPS OR THEIR BY-PRODUCTS, URBAN WOOD WASTE, MILL RESIDUE,
13 SLASH, OR BRUSH;

14 (II) ANIMAL WASTES AND PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL WASTES; OR

15 (III) METHANE PRODUCED AT LANDFILLS OR AS A BY-PRODUCT OF
16 THE TREATMENT OF WASTEWATER RESIDUALS.

17 (2) (a) THE BOARD SHALL CONDUCT OR CAUSE TO BE CONDUCTED
18 A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON BIOCHAR, INCLUDING ITS USE IN WILDFIRE
19 MITIGATION EFFORTS.

20 (b) THE STUDY MUST, AT A MINIMUM:

21 (I) CREATE PARAMETERS AROUND WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD
22 QUALITY BIOCHAR;

23 (II) EVALUATE BENEFICIAL USES FOR BIOCHAR;

24 (III) EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF BIOMASS AND BIOCHAR ON FOREST
25 HEALTH;

1 (IV) IDENTIFY POTENTIAL MARKETS FOR BIOCHAR;

2 (V) IDENTIFY POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES THAT COULD
3 ARISE IN THE BIOCHAR CREATION PROCESS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS; AND

4 (VI) EVALUATE BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING BIOCHAR IN A
5 MANNER THAT OPTIMIZES CARBON SEQUESTRATION.

6 (3) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2026, THE BOARD SHALL SUBMIT A
7 REPORT TO THE WILDFIRE MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE CREATED IN
8 SECTION 2-3-1602, OR, IF THE WILDFIRE MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE IS
9 REPEALED, TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ENERGY AND
10 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND
11 ENERGY COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES. THE REPORT
12 MUST INCLUDE THE STUDY'S RESEARCH, FINDINGS, AND
13 RECOMMENDATIONS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (2)(b) OF THIS
14 SECTION.

15 (4) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2027.

16 **SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
17 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
18 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
19 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
20 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this
21 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
22 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
23 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
24 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

Bill B

LLS NO. 24-0420.01 Pierce Lively x2059

HOUSE BILL

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Snyder and Velasco, Dickson

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cutter and Jaquez Lewis, Ginal

House Committees

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING THE NEEDS OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL DURING**
102 **AN EMERGENCY, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, STRONGLY**
103 **ENCOURAGING THAT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS**
104 **ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL**
105 **DURING AN EMERGENCY AND THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MAKE**
106 **CERTAIN INFORMATION PUBLICLY AVAILABLE RELATING TO AN**
107 **INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL DURING AN EMERGENCY.**

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/>.)

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

Wildfire Matters Review Committee. The bill strongly encourages a locally defined or interjurisdictional emergency management plan amended or created on or after July 1, 2024, to address the needs of an individual with an animal during an emergency by:

- Including provisions for the evacuation, shelter, and transport of an individual with an animal and that animal; and
- Requiring, to the extent practicable, that at least one shelter established during an emergency is designated to accommodate an individual with an animal and that animal.

The bill also strongly encourages a city, county, or city and county to make available to the public information for animal emergency preparedness, including:

- Information for creating an evacuation plan and emergency checklist for individuals with animals consistent with recommendations publicly published by the United States department of agriculture and the federal emergency management agency;
- Local organizations that may provide emergency animal assistance; and
- Local emergency shelters, cooling centers, or warming centers, when active, that can accommodate an individual with an animal.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-33.5-707, **add**
3 (8.5) as follows:

4 **24-33.5-707. Local and interjurisdictional emergency**
5 **management agencies and services - definition.** (8.5) (a) A LOCALLY
6 DEFINED OR INTERJURISDICTIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN
7 AMENDED OR CREATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (8) OF THIS SECTION ON
8 OR AFTER JULY 1, 2024, IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ADDRESS THE
9 NEEDS OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL DURING AN EMERGENCY BY:

10 (I) INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR THE EVACUATION, SHELTER, AND
11 TRANSPORT OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL AND THAT ANIMAL; AND

1 (II) REQUIRING, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THAT AT LEAST ONE
2 SHELTER ESTABLISHED DURING AN EMERGENCY IS DESIGNATED TO
3 ACCOMMODATE AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL AND THAT ANIMAL.

4 (b) ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2025, A CITY, COUNTY, OR CITY AND
5 COUNTY IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC
6 INFORMATION FOR ANIMAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, INCLUDING:

7 (I) INFORMATION FOR CREATING AN EVACUATION PLAN AND
8 EMERGENCY CHECKLIST FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ANIMALS CONSISTENT
9 WITH RECOMMENDATIONS PUBLICLY PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED STATES
10 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY
11 MANAGEMENT AGENCY;

12 (II) LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT MAY PROVIDE EMERGENCY
13 ANIMAL ASSISTANCE; AND

14 (III) LOCAL EMERGENCY SHELTERS, COOLING CENTERS, OR
15 WARMING CENTERS, WHEN ACTIVE, THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE AN
16 INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ANIMAL.

17 (c) AS USED IN THIS SUBSECTION (8.5), UNLESS THE CONTEXT
18 OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "ANIMAL" MEANS BOTH A "PET ANIMAL", AS
19 DEFINED IN SECTION 38-20-101 (3.5), AND A "SERVICE ANIMAL", AS
20 DEFINED IN SECTION 12-240-144 (4)(c).

21 **SECTION 2. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
22 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
23 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
24 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
25 institutions.

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

Bill C

LLS NO. 24-0423.01 Jennifer Berman x3286

HOUSE BILL

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Velasco and Snyder, Dickson

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cutter and Will, Jaquez Lewis, Ginal

House Committees

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES TO APPLY FOR**
102 **WILDFIRE-RELATED GRANT MONEY.**

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/>.)

Wildfire Matters Review Committee. The bill directs the rural opportunity office (office) in the Colorado office of economic development to assist rural communities with identifying and applying for state or federal grants for wildfire mitigation, prevention, response, or risk management efforts (wildfire-related grants).

On or before July 1, 2025, and on or before July 1 of every odd

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

year thereafter, the office is required to prepare a report summarizing its work to assist rural communities with identifying and applying for wildfire-related grants. The report must include information about the rural communities that the office assists and the grants awarded to rural communities that the office assists. The office is required to submit the report to the wildfire matters review committee or, if the committee no longer exists, to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over natural resources matters.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-48.5-133, **amend**
3 (3)(c) and (3)(d); and **add** (3)(e) and (4) as follows:

4 **24-48.5-133. Rural opportunity office - creation - duties -**
5 **wildfire-related grants - technical assistance - legislative declaration**
6 **- definition.** (3) The rural opportunity office shall:

7 (c) Make recommendations that inform the governor's policy on
8 rural economic development matters, including policy on economic
9 development issues unique to rural communities; ~~and~~

10 (d) Measure the success of program outreach and conduct research
11 to determine whether Colorado's rural communities receive more
12 statewide funding as a result of the efforts of the rural opportunity office;

13 AND

14 (e) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION,
15 PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES TO IDENTIFY
16 AND APPLY FOR GRANT MONEY MADE AVAILABLE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES
17 FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION, PREVENTION, RESPONSE, OR RISK
18 MANAGEMENT EFFORTS.

19 (4) (a) THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE SHALL:

20 (I) IDENTIFY, MAINTAIN, PERIODICALLY UPDATE, AND PUBLISH ON
21 ITS PUBLIC WEBSITE A LIST OF STATE AND FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

1 AWARDING GRANT MONEY TO RURAL COMMUNITIES FOR
2 WILDFIRE-RELATED GRANTS; AND

3 (II) PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES TO:

4 (A) IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE WILDFIRE-RELATED GRANTS FOR
5 WHICH TO APPLY; AND

6 (B) APPLY FOR WILDFIRE-RELATED GRANTS.

7 (b) (I) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, AND ON OR BEFORE JULY 1 OF
8 EACH ODD YEAR THEREAFTER, THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE SHALL
9 PREPARE A REPORT SUMMARIZING ITS WORK TO ASSIST RURAL
10 COMMUNITIES WITH IDENTIFYING AND APPLYING FOR WILDFIRE-RELATED
11 GRANTS. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

12 (A) THE RURAL COMMUNITIES THAT THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY
13 OFFICE ASSISTED;

14 (B) THE RURAL COMMUNITIES THAT THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY
15 OFFICE ASSISTED THAT WERE AWARDED GRANTS; AND

16 (C) OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES IDENTIFIED IN SUBSECTION
17 (4)(b)(I)(B) OF THIS SECTION, HOW MUCH GRANT MONEY WAS AWARDED
18 TO EACH RURAL COMMUNITY THAT THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE
19 ASSISTED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (4).

20 (II) (A) THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE SHALL SUBMIT THE MOST
21 RECENT REPORT TO THE WILDFIRE MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE CREATED
22 IN SECTION 2-3-1602 (1)(a) OR, IF THE COMMITTEE NO LONGER EXISTS, TO
23 THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AGRICULTURE, WATER, AND NATURAL
24 RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL
25 RESOURCES COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES. THE RURAL
26 OPPORTUNITY OFFICE SHALL POST EACH REPORT ON ITS PUBLIC WEBSITE.

27 (B) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), THE

1 REPORTING REQUIREMENT SET FORTH IN SUBSECTION (4)(b)(II)(A) OF THIS
2 SECTION CONTINUES INDEFINITELY.

3 (c) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, "WILDFIRE-RELATED GRANT" MEANS
4 A FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT MADE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST COMMUNITIES,
5 INCLUDING RURAL COMMUNITIES, WITH DESIGNING, DEVELOPING, OR
6 OPERATING A WILDFIRE MITIGATION, PREVENTION, RESPONSE, OR RISK
7 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY, INCLUDING ANY EDUCATION AND
8 OUTREACH EFFORTS.

9 **SECTION 2. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
10 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
11 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
12 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
13 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this
14 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
15 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
16 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
17 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

Attachment D

Bill D

LLS NO. 24-0424.01 Pierce Lively x2059

SENATE BILL

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cutter and Jaquez Lewis,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Snyder and Dickson, Velasco

Senate Committees

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING ASSISTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN DISASTER-RELATED**
102 **PROGRAMS, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, ESTABLISHING**
103 **THE SLASH REMOVAL PILOT PROGRAM AND PROVIDING**
104 **GUIDANCE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON DEBRIS REMOVAL**
105 **PROGRAMS.**

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/>.)

Wildfire Matters Review Committee. The bill assists local governments with disaster-related programs in 2 ways.

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

First, **section 1** of the bill establishes the slash removal pilot program (pilot program) under the wildfire mitigation incentives for local governments grant program, which is administered by the forest service. The pilot program supports county efforts to efficiently and effectively remove slash. The forest service must establish the policies and procedures by which it will select counties for the pilot program and implement the pilot program.

Second, **section 2** requires the division of homeland security and emergency management in the department of public safety to provide guidance to local governments on the following issues concerning debris removal:

- Negotiating debris removal program terms with the federal emergency management agency to provide predictability for homeowners and ensure that there are not duplicate payments for debris removal;
- Developing standard right of entry forms that include opt-in and opt-out provisions and clear insurance assignment of benefit language;
- Establishing right-of-way cleanup procedures, including the removal of private vehicles, for public roadways;
- Considering the removal of hazardous materials and other safety and environmental concerns; and
- Ensuring that local debris removal programs are limited to residential debris removal and do not include commercial debris removal.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-31-318, **amend**
3 (7)(b) and (10); and **add** (1)(g), (1)(h), and (9.5) as follows:

4 **23-31-318. Wildfire mitigation incentives for local**
5 **governments - grant program - slash removal pilot program - grant**
6 **awards - fund - reporting - definitions - repeal.** (1) As used in this
7 section:

8 (g) "PILOT PROGRAM" MEANS THE SLASH REMOVAL PILOT
9 PROGRAM CREATED IN SUBSECTION (9.5) OF THIS SECTION.

10 (h) "SLASH" MEANS THE RESIDUE, INCLUDING TREETOPS,
11 BRANCHES, AND BARK, CREATED AS THE RESULT OF WILDFIRE RISK

1 MITIGATION, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-31-313 (3)(g).

2 (7) (b) The fund must only be used for the purpose of funding
3 awards under the grant program AND THE PILOT PROGRAM less the
4 administrative costs of the forest service, not to exceed five percent of the
5 balance in the fund at any one time, in administering the grant program.

6 (9.5) THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL ADMINISTER AND CREATE A
7 SLASH REMOVAL PILOT PROGRAM FOR COUNTIES. THE PILOT PROGRAM
8 MUST SUPPORT COUNTY EFFORTS TO EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY
9 REMOVE SLASH. IN ADMINISTERING AND CREATING THE SLASH REMOVAL
10 PILOT PROGRAM, THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL:

11 (a) DETERMINE BEST PRACTICES FOR THE EFFICIENT AND
12 EFFECTIVE REMOVAL OF SLASH AND HOW A PILOT PROGRAM COULD ASSIST
13 THOSE PRACTICES;

14 (b) ESTABLISH THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES BY WHICH IT WILL
15 SELECT COUNTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN AND IMPLEMENT THE PILOT
16 PROGRAM; AND

17 (c) PROVIDE THE COUNTIES IT SELECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
18 PILOT PROGRAM WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR
19 THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE REMOVAL OF SLASH.

20 (10) This section is repealed, effective September 1, 2027. Before
21 the repeal, the department of regulatory agencies shall review the grant
22 program AND THE PILOT PROGRAM pursuant to section 24-34-104.

23 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-33.5-1604, **add**
24 (6) as follows:

25 **24-33.5-1604. Duties and powers of the division.** (6) (a) IN
26 ORDER TO FACILITATE THE REMOVAL OF DEBRIS FOLLOWING A DISASTER,
27 THE DIVISION SHALL PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON THE

1 FOLLOWING ISSUES CONCERNING DEBRIS REMOVAL:

2 (I) NEGOTIATING DEBRIS REMOVAL PROGRAM TERMS WITH THE
3 FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO PROVIDE
4 PREDICTABILITY FOR HOMEOWNERS AND ENSURE THAT THERE ARE NOT
5 DUPLICATE PAYMENTS FOR DEBRIS REMOVAL;

6 (II) DEVELOPING STANDARD RIGHT OF ENTRY FORMS THAT
7 INCLUDE OPT-IN AND OPT-OUT PROVISIONS AND CLEAR INSURANCE
8 ASSIGNMENT OF BENEFIT LANGUAGE;

9 (III) ESTABLISHING RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEANUP PROCEDURES,
10 INCLUDING THE REMOVAL OF PRIVATE VEHICLES, FOR PUBLIC ROADWAYS;

11 (IV) CONSIDERING THE REMOVAL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND
12 OTHER SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS; AND

13 (V) ENSURING THAT LOCAL DEBRIS REMOVAL PROGRAMS ARE
14 LIMITED TO RESIDENTIAL DEBRIS REMOVAL AND DO NOT INCLUDE
15 COMMERCIAL DEBRIS REMOVAL.

16 (b) THE DIVISION SHALL PUBLISH THE GUIDANCE IT PROVIDES
17 PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (6) ON ITS WEBSITE.

18 (c) THE DIVISION SHALL UPDATE THE INFORMATION IT PROVIDES
19 AND PUBLISHES PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (6) AS NECESSARY.

20 **SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
21 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
22 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except
23 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V
24 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this
25 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
26 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in

1 November 2024 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
2 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

Attachment E

Bill E

LLS NO. 24-0427.01 Brita Darling x2241

HOUSE BILL

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Story and Velasco, Snyder, Dickson

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cutter, Jaquez Lewis

House Committees

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING THE CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS**
102 **RELATING TO WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION IN THE**
103 **WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE, AND, IN CONNECTION**
104 **THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

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/>.)

Wildfire Matters Review Committee. The bill requires the Colorado state forest service (forest service) to conduct enhanced wildfire awareness month outreach campaigns (campaigns) through 2027 and

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

other outreach efforts through the 2026-27 state fiscal year that are expected to increase awareness of wildfire risk mitigation by residents in the wildland-urban interface.

For state fiscal year 2024-25, the bill appropriates \$300,000 from the general fund to the healthy forests and vibrant communities fund for use by the forest service for the ongoing campaigns and outreach efforts.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-31-313, **amend**
3 (9.5)(c) and (9.5)(e)(I); and **add** (9.5)(f) as follows:

4 **23-31-313. Healthy forests - vibrant communities - funds**
5 **created - outreach working group - legislative declaration - definition**
6 **- repeal. (9.5) Wildfire risk mitigation public outreach and**
7 **educational campaign - legislative declaration - appropriation.**

8 (c) After considering feedback from the working group, and subject to
9 available appropriations, the forest service:

10 (I) Shall implement an enhanced wildfire awareness month
11 outreach campaign in conjunction with the division of fire prevention and
12 control in the department of public safety and the United States forest
13 service in 2023 and 2024, and, ~~subject to available appropriations, may~~
14 ~~implement enhanced wildfire awareness month outreach campaigns in~~
15 ~~subsequent years~~ THROUGH 2027; and

16 (II) ~~May~~ SHALL implement other outreach efforts during the
17 2022-23 and ~~2023-24~~ THROUGH 2026-27 state fiscal years and ~~subsequent~~
18 ~~state fiscal years~~ that are expected to increase awareness of wildfire risk
19 mitigation by residents in the wildland-urban interface.

20 (e) (I) During the 2023 and ~~2024~~ THROUGH THE 2027 legislative
21 interims, the state forester shall submit a report to the wildfire matters
22 review committee created in section 2-3-1602 concerning outreach efforts

1 implemented pursuant to this subsection (9.5), OR, IF THE WILDFIRE
2 MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE IS REPEALED, TO THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES AGRICULTURE, WATER, AND NATURAL RESOURCES
4 COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
5 COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

6 (f) (I) FOR PURPOSES OF CONDUCTING ONGOING WILDFIRE
7 AWARENESS MONTH OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS AND OTHER OUTREACH
8 EFFORTS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (9.5)(c) OF THIS SECTION, THE
9 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND
10 DOLLARS TO THE HEALTHY FORESTS AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES FUND
11 CREATED IN SUBSECTION (10) OF THIS SECTION.

12 (II) THIS SUBSECTION (9.5)(f) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1,
13 2028.

14 **SECTION 2. Appropriation.** For the 2024-25 state fiscal year,
15 \$300,000 is appropriated to the healthy forests and vibrant communities
16 fund created in section 23-31-313 (10), C.R.S. This appropriation is from
17 the general fund. The department of higher education is responsible for
18 the accounting related to this appropriation.

19 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
20 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
21 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
22 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
23 institutions.

