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FISCAL NOTE

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Prime Sponsors: Sen. Donovan; Rankin Bill Status: Senate Agriculture
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Bill Topic: BACKCOUNTRY SEARCH AND RESCUE IN COLORADO

- Summary of Fiscal Impact: State Revenue, TABOR Refund, State Expenditure, Local Government, State Transfer, Statutory Public Entity

The bill directs the Department of Natural Resources to study the challenges related to backcountry search and rescue, and to conduct outreach and training on physical and psychological impacts of this work. It increases state expenditures in FY 2020-21 only.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2020-21, the bill requires an appropriation of \$208,190 to the Department of Natural Resources.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Table 1 State Fiscal Impacts Under SB 20-130

Table with 3 columns: Category, FY 2020-21, FY 2021-22. Rows include Revenue, Expenditures (General Fund, Centrally Appropriated, Total, Total FTE), Transfers, and TABOR Refund.

Summary of Legislation

The bill directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to conduct a study and develop recommendations on how to address the challenges associated with backcountry search and rescue. The study must address issues of coordination, compensation to workers and volunteers, equipment, physical and psychological impacts, governmental immunity, training needs, and the need for public education on outdoor safety. In conducting the study, the DNR must coordinate with stakeholders. DNR must report to the General Assembly on its findings as part of its SMART Act hearing in January 2021.

Additionally, the DNR must conduct outreach and training across the state on physical and psychological impacts of backcountry search and rescue work. This may include working with a consultant to assess the needs of volunteers and providing training directly, developing a grant program for local government agencies or search and rescue organizations to provide training to volunteers, or developing other services to support volunteers.

The bill adds the word "backcountry" to the name of the search and rescue fund and associated programs in the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), and defines backcountry search and rescue for the purposes of the bill.

Background

Colorado's search and rescue program reimburses political subdivisions of the state and search-and-rescue organizations for the costs incurred in conducting search and rescue operations. Revenue to the Search and Rescue Fund primarily comes from two sources:

- a \$0.25 surcharge applied to boat, snowmobile, and off-highway vehicle registrations, and hunting and fishing licenses; and
- from the sale of Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue cards, which cost \$3 for one year (with \$1 being retained by the vendor), or \$12 for five years (with \$3 being retained by the vendor.)

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in the DNR by \$234,776 in FY 2020-21 only, and increases workload in other agencies. These costs are shown in Table 2 and described below.

**Table 2
Expenditures Under SB 20-130**

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Department of Natural Resources		
Personal Services	\$134,665	-
Operating Expenses	\$2,025	-
Capital Outlay Costs	\$6,200	-
Travel	\$12,300	-
Contractor for Mental Health Outreach	\$53,000	-
Centrally Appropriated Costs*	\$26,586	-
Total Cost	\$234,776	-
Total FTE	1.5 FTE	-

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

Department of Natural Resources. DNR will hire 1.5 FTE to facilitate a stakeholder process, administer the study, and develop recommendations on how to address the challenges associated with backcountry search and rescue. A contractor will be hired to conduct 16 mental health trainings at an estimated cost of \$3,000 per class and \$5,000 total to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. These costs will be paid from the General Fund.

Department of Local Affairs. DOLA will incur costs to redesign print materials and modify the website to reflect the addition of the word "backcountry" in the program's name. Additionally, DOLA will experience a workload increase to participate in the study. These costs can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

Department of Public Safety. Likewise, the Departments of Public Safety must participate in the study, which can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

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 estimated to be \$26,586 in FY 2020-21.

Local Government

Similar to state agencies, local governments and county sheriffs must participate in the study and help develop recommendations. This workload can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

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 Appropriations

For FY 2019-20, the bill requires a General Fund appropriation of \$208,190 to the Department of Natural Resources, and 1.5 FTE.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties
Natural Resources

Local Affairs
Public Safety

Municipalities
Sheriffs