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Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

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Bill 2

LLS NO. 23-0082.01 Alana Rosen x2606

INTERIM COMMITTEE BILL

Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee

BILL TOPIC: "Water Literacy Education In Public Schools"

DEADLINES: File by: 9/1/2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING ENHANCING WATER LITERACY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC**
102 **SCHOOLS.**

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/>.)

Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee. The bill creates the water literacy resource bank (resource bank) in the department of education (department) beginning in the 2023-24 budget year. In creating the resource bank and identifying or developing associated curricula, the department is required to solicit input from state agencies, experts, and nonprofit organizations within the industry. On and after July

*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

1, 2025, the department is required to make the materials in the resource bank available, to the greatest extent feasible without charge, to school districts, district charter schools, institute charter schools, and boards of cooperative services (BOCES).

The resource bank may identify existing resources, tools, and trainings that provide opportunities to connect and support educators interested in fostering water literacy. The resource bank may also identify existing resources and tools that provide opportunities for industry experts in water literacy to be paired with an educator to help plan, co-teach, or support courses in water literacy.

On or before July 1, 2023, the department is required to create the environmental education content specialist position to oversee the creation, implementation, and maintenance of the resource bank and ensure that water literacy resource materials and curricula are implemented within existing social studies, science, or other applicable standards. The environmental education content specialist will coordinate with state agencies, experts, and nonprofit organizations within the industry to update water literacy curricula, training materials, and other resources.

On or before December 1, 2024, the department is required to contract with a nonprofit organization within the industry to act as the state coordinator to research and curate existing water literacy curricula, training materials, and other resources in coordination with the environmental education content specialist, and, when necessary, create new water literacy curricula, training materials, and other resources to include in the resource bank.

The bill requires the department, beginning in the 2025-26 budget year, to partner with educator preparation programs and water education programs at institutions of higher education to ensure access to water literacy resources provided by educator preparation programs and water education programs at institutions of higher education to school districts, district charter schools, institute charter schools, and BOCES.

The bill allows the department to partner with water conservancy districts, the department of public health and environment, and the department of natural resources to support local, hands-on, age-appropriate, and project-based learning opportunities for students to encourage water literacy, including securing funding to support field trips and experiential opportunities for students and educators.

The department may implement leadership development opportunities for students to participate in water resources management and planning simulations that encourage informed discourse and decision-making.

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

1 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 22-2-128.8** as
2 follows:

3 **22-2-128.8. Water literacy - resource bank - technical**
4 **assistance - partnerships - definition.** (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION,
5 UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "WATER LITERACY" MEANS
6 KNOWLEDGE OF CRITICAL WATER CONCEPTS, INCLUDING WATER SOURCES,
7 WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER CONSERVATION, AND COLORADO-SPECIFIC
8 WATER-RELATED CRITICAL WATER CONCEPTS.

9 (2) (a) BEGINNING IN THE 2023-24 BUDGET YEAR, THE
10 DEPARTMENT SHALL CREATE AND MAINTAIN A PUBLICLY AVAILABLE
11 RESOURCE BANK OF EVIDENCE-BASED, RESEARCH-BASED, AND PROMISING
12 PROGRAM MATERIALS AND CURRICULA PERTAINING TO WATER LITERACY.
13 IN CREATING THE RESOURCE BANK AND IDENTIFYING EXISTING OR
14 DEVELOPING NEW CURRICULA, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SOLICIT INPUT
15 FROM STATE AGENCIES, EXPERTS, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN
16 THE INDUSTRY. SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, THE
17 DEPARTMENT SHALL SOLICIT REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FOR AND MAY
18 CONTRACT FOR:

19 (I) THE ORGANIZATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE RESOURCE
20 BANK, INCLUDING MATERIALS ON COLORADO-SPECIFIC AND RIVER
21 BASIN-SPECIFIC PHENOMENA AND CASE STUDIES;

22 (II) THE CURATION OF EXISTING WATER LITERACY CURRICULA AND
23 THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WATER LITERACY CURRICULA FOR SCHOOLS,
24 AS NEEDED, THAT IS PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS; AND

25 (III) TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF CONCERNING
26 WATER LITERACY.

27 (b) ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2025, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL MAKE

1 THE MATERIAL IN THE RESOURCE BANK AVAILABLE, TO THE GREATEST
2 EXTENT FEASIBLE WITHOUT CHARGE, TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS, DISTRICT
3 CHARTER SCHOOLS, INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOLS, AND BOARDS OF
4 COOPERATIVE SERVICES. UPON THE REQUEST OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT,
5 DISTRICT CHARTER SCHOOL, INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL, OR BOARD OF
6 COOPERATIVE SERVICES, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE TECHNICAL
7 ASSISTANCE WITHOUT CHARGE TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, DISTRICT
8 CHARTER SCHOOL, INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOL, OR BOARD OF
9 COOPERATIVE SERVICES IN DESIGNING AGE-APPROPRIATE CURRICULA
10 PERTAINING TO WATER LITERACY.

11 (c) THE RESOURCE BANK MAY IDENTIFY EXISTING RESOURCES AND
12 TOOLS THAT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT EDUCATORS
13 INTERESTED IN WATER LITERACY. THE RESOURCE BANK MAY ALSO
14 IDENTIFY EXISTING RESOURCES AND TOOLS THAT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES
15 FOR INDUSTRY EXPERTS IN WATER LITERACY TO BE PAIRED WITH AN
16 EDUCATOR TO HELP PLAN, CO-TEACH, OR SUPPORT COURSES IN WATER
17 LITERACY.

18 (3) (a) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2023, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
19 CREATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONTENT SPECIALIST POSITION
20 TO OVERSEE THE CREATION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE
21 WATER LITERACY RESOURCE BANK DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2)(a) OF
22 THIS SECTION AND ENSURE THAT THE WATER LITERACY RESOURCE
23 MATERIALS AND CURRICULA ARE IMPLEMENTED WITHIN EXISTING SOCIAL
24 STUDIES, SCIENCE, OR OTHER APPLICABLE STANDARDS AS ADOPTED BY THE
25 STATE BOARD PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-7-1005. THE ENVIRONMENTAL
26 EDUCATION CONTENT SPECIALIST SHALL COORDINATE WITH STATE
27 AGENCIES, EXPERTS, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE

1 STATE COORDINATOR DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(b) OF THIS SECTION,
2 WITHIN THE INDUSTRY TO UPDATE WATER LITERACY CURRICULA, TRAINING
3 MATERIALS, AND OTHER RESOURCES.

4 (b) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
5 CONTRACT WITH A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY TO
6 ACT AS THE STATE COORDINATOR TO CURATE EXISTING WATER LITERACY
7 CURRICULA, TRAINING MATERIALS, AND OTHER RESOURCES IN
8 COORDINATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONTENT
9 SPECIALIST DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(a) OF THIS SECTION, AND, WHEN
10 NECESSARY, CREATE NEW WATER LITERACY CURRICULA, TRAINING
11 MATERIALS, AND OTHER RESOURCES TO INCLUDE IN THE RESOURCE BANK.

12 (4) (a) BEGINNING IN THE 2025-26 BUDGET YEAR, THE
13 DEPARTMENT SHALL PARTNER WITH EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS
14 AND WATER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
15 EDUCATION TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO WATER LITERACY RESOURCES
16 PROVIDED BY EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND WATER
17 EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO
18 SCHOOL DISTRICTS, DISTRICT CHARTER SCHOOLS, INSTITUTE CHARTER
19 SCHOOLS, AND BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES. WATER LITERACY
20 RESOURCES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

21 (I) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR
22 EDUCATORS;

23 (II) AGE-APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS;

24 (III) INTERNSHIP AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATIONAL
25 OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN WATER LITERACY;

26 (IV) TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT SCHOOL DISTRICTS, CHARTER
27 SCHOOLS, INSTITUTE CHARTER SCHOOLS, AND BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE

1 SERVICES WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
2 FOCUSED ON WATER LITERACY ACROSS THE STATE; AND

3 (V) RESOURCES TO FUND EXPANDED FIELD TRIPS AND
4 EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOCUSED ON WATER LITERACY FOR
5 STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS.

6 (b) THE DEPARTMENT MAY PARTNER WITH WATER CONSERVANCY
7 DISTRICTS, THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT, AND
8 THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LOCAL,
9 HANDS-ON, AGE-APPROPRIATE, AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING
10 OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ENCOURAGE WATER LITERACY,
11 INCLUDING SECURING FUNDING TO EXPAND FIELD TRIPS AND EXPERIENTIAL
12 OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS.

13 (c) THE DEPARTMENT MAY IMPLEMENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
14 OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN WATER RESOURCES
15 MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING SIMULATIONS THAT ENCOURAGE INFORMED
16 DISCOURSE AND DECISION-MAKING.

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