

HOUSE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE REPORT

Chair of Committee

March 27, 2023
Date

Committee on State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs.

After consideration on the merits, the Committee recommends the following:

HB23-1237 be amended as follows, and as so amended, be referred to the Committee on Appropriations with favorable recommendation:

1 Amend printed bill, strike everything below the enacting clause and
2 substitute:

3 **"SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general
4 assembly finds and declares that:

5 (a) Multi-hazard early warning systems are a cost-effective
6 emergency and disaster risk reduction measure that have resulted in
7 saving peoples' lives, reducing disruptions, reducing property losses, and
8 minimizing economic losses;

9 (b) In recent years, Colorado has experienced extremely
10 destructive wildfires, and it is in the interest of the state of Colorado to be
11 proactive in building resilient communities;

12 (c) Multi-hazard early warning systems provide a good return on
13 investment. The 2019 Global Commission on Adaptation report, "Adapt
14 Now", found early warning systems provide a more than tenfold return on
15 investment;

16 (d) Multi-hazard early warning systems are only as strong as their
17 weakest link, and one break or delay in information transfer, such as the
18 failure to communicate warnings in inclusive languages, may derail the
19 entire effort;

20 (e) Colorado is a diverse state where over 40 languages are
21 spoken, per the most recent census data, and diversity is one of its
22 strengths; and

23 (f) Early warning systems and dissemination alerts need to reach
24 and better support at-risk communities in a time- and language-sensitive
25 manner and focus on the last-mile outreach using a mix of communication
26 channels. Collecting information about the state's emergency response
27 systems can inform future legislation to improve public safety.

1 (2) Therefore, the general assembly determines that it is in the best
2 interests of the people of the state of Colorado to update the state's
3 emergency alert systems to ensure the systems are able to reach people in
4 multiple languages and to work together to proactively address
5 emergency response for future disasters.

6 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-20-145 as
7 follows:

8 **23-20-145. Language access emergency alert study -**
9 **definitions - repeal.** (1) (a) THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO'S NATURAL
10 HAZARDS CENTER SHALL CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHAT
11 MUNICIPALITIES, SHERIFF'S OFFICES, COUNTIES, FIRE DISTRICTS, AND LOCAL
12 911 AGENCIES NEED TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY ALERTS IN
13 MINORITY LANGUAGES BY JULY 1, 2024, AND WHAT LOCAL 911 AGENCIES
14 NEED IN ORDER TO PROVIDE LIVE INTERPRETATION DURING A 911 CALL BY
15 JULY 1, 2024. THE CENTER SHALL CONSULT WITH THE DIVISION OF
16 HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN THE
17 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, MUNICIPALITIES, SHERIFF'S OFFICES,
18 COUNTIES, FIRE DISTRICTS, AND LOCAL 911 AGENCIES IN CONDUCTING THE
19 STUDY AND ALLOW PUBLIC INPUT.

20 (b) THE STUDY MUST:

21 (I) IDENTIFY THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF MULTI-HAZARD
22 EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO EASILY AND
23 SUCCESSFULLY REACH RESIDENTS AND VISITORS WITHOUT HAVING TO OPT
24 IN, AS WELL AS OPT-IN OPTIONS, OUTPUTS FOR EMERGENCY ALERT
25 SYSTEMS AND MESSAGES, AND THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY
26 ALERTS BY USING TRANSLATIONS IN MINORITY LANGUAGES;

27 (II) SURVEY STATE AGENCIES, COUNTIES, MUNICIPALITIES,
28 SHERIFF'S OFFICES, FIRE DISTRICTS, FIRE AUTHORITIES, AND LOCAL 911
29 AGENCIES TO IDENTIFY THE CURRENT CAPABILITIES OF EXISTING
30 EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEMS USED IN COLORADO AND COMPARE THEM TO
31 THE IDENTIFIED ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS;

32 (III) IDENTIFY GAPS IN THE CAPABILITIES OF EXISTING EMERGENCY
33 ALERT SYSTEMS REQUIRING CORRECTION;

34 (IV) IDENTIFY RESOURCES, INCLUDING FEDERAL FUNDING
35 OPPORTUNITIES, TO IMPLEMENT A GRANT PROGRAM TO ASSIST
36 MUNICIPALITIES, SHERIFF'S OFFICES, COUNTIES, FIRE DISTRICTS, AND LOCAL
37 911 AGENCIES IN OBTAINING EMERGENCY RESPONSE TECHNOLOGY
38 SYSTEMS THAT CAN PROVIDE EMERGENCY ALERTS IN MINORITY
39 LANGUAGES;

40 (V) DETERMINE BEST PRACTICES, WHICH MAY BE IDENTIFIED BY
41 REVIEWING PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES, FOR HIRING MULTILINGUAL AND
42 MULTICULTURAL STAFF;

43 (VI) DETERMINE BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING LOCAL

1 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS WITH CONNECTIONS TO POPULATIONS THAT
2 SPEAK A MINORITY LANGUAGE; AND

3 (VII) PRESENT RESEARCH REGARDING EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY
4 ALERTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AFTER CONSULTATION WITH A
5 STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION THAT ADVOCATES FOR PEOPLE WITH
6 DISABILITIES.

7 (c) THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO'S NATURAL HAZARD CENTER
8 SHALL SUBMIT ITS STUDY REPORT TO THE DIVISION OF HOMELAND
9 SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
10 SAFETY AND TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY NOVEMBER 1, 2023.

11 (2) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION:

12 (a) "INTERPRETATION" MEANS THE SPOKEN CONVERSION OF ONE
13 LANGUAGE INTO ANOTHER LANGUAGE.

14 (b) "TRANSLATION" MEANS THE WRITTEN CONVERSION OF ONE
15 LANGUAGE INTO ANOTHER LANGUAGE.

16 (3) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024.

17 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,
18 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
19 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety."

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