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Final Fiscal Note

Drafting Number: LLS 21-0025
Prime Sponsors: Rep. Valdez D.; Will
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Bill Status: Postponed Indefinitely
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Bill Topic: BACKCOUNTRY SEARCH AND RESCUE IN COLORADO

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

The bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a study of the challenges of backcountry search and rescue and perform outreach and training statewide for volunteers. The bill increases state expenditures in FY 2021-22 only.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2021-22 only, the bill requires an appropriation of \$180,511 to the Department of Natural Resources.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill. This bill was not enacted into law; therefore, the impacts identified in this analysis do not take effect..

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under HB 21-1118

Table with 4 columns: Category, Sub-category, Budget Year FY 2021-22, and Out Year FY 2022-23. Rows include Revenue, Expenditures (General Fund, Centrally Appropriated, Total Expenditures, Total FTE), Transfers, and TABOR Refund.

Summary of Legislation

This bill requires that the Division of Parks and Wildlife in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conduct a study to develop recommendations for addressing the challenges associated with backcountry search and rescue in the state. The bill details the minimum topics the study must address, including the availability of compensation and benefits, and training and other supports for backcountry search and rescue personnel and volunteers. The department must report its findings to the state legislature in January 2022.

The DNR must conduct outreach and training across the state on the physical injuries and psychological stress faced by backcountry search and rescue volunteers. This outreach may include working with a consultant and developing a grant program for local government and backcountry search and rescue organizations.

Finally, the bill updates the name of the Colorado Recreation Search and Rescue Card Program and the associated Search and Rescue Cash Fund to insert the word “backcountry.”

Background

Colorado’s current search and rescue program is supported by the Search and Rescue Fund which reimburses local governments and search and rescue organizations statewide for the costs incurred to conduct search and rescue operations, including reimbursements for equipment and training. The Search and Rescue Fund is managed by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The program receives funding from a surcharge for off-highway vehicle registrations, hunting & fishing licenses, and sale of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue Card (CORSAR).

State Expenditures

For FY 2021-22 only, the bill increases state expenditures by \$200,654 and 1.1 FTE. New General Fund expenditures are in the DNR. Additionally, the DOLA will have workload and cash fund expenses to rebrand and market existing search and rescue materials. New state expenses are displayed in Table 2 and discussed below.

Table 2
Expenditures Under HB 21-1118

Cost Components	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23
Department of Natural Resources		
Personal Services	\$101,044	-
Operating Expenses	\$1,755	-
Capital Outlay Costs	\$12,400	-
Travel	\$12,312	-
Contract Services	\$53,000	-
Centrally Appropriated Costs ¹	\$20,143	-
FTE – Personal Services	1.1 FTE	-
Total	\$200,654	-

¹ Centrally appropriated costs are not included in the bill's appropriation.

Department of Natural Resources. The DNR will require additional staff resources and contract services in FY 2021-22 only. New department staff is required to administer the required study and coordinate a stakeholder process and to report results. Contract services are required to conduct a search and rescue mental health program to include outreach and training on the physical injuries and psychological stress faced by search and rescue volunteers. The DNR will also have expenses for travel.

Department of Local Affairs. Adding the word “backcountry” to the title of the CORSAR card and related materials requires staff time for rebranding and modifying printed program materials, web-based and electronic program material, and to conduct marketing and outreach to vendors and the general public. These efforts do not require new 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 \$20,143 in FY 2021-22.

Effective Date

The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Transportation and Local Government Committee on March 2, 2021

State Appropriations

For FY 2021-22, the bill requires a General Fund appropriation of \$180,511 to the Department of Natural Resources, and 1.1 FTE

State and Local Government Contacts

Local Affairs

Natural Resources

Public Safety