

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

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 23-0918.01 Nicole Myers x4326

HOUSE BILL 23-1247

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Lukens and Winter T.,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Roberts and Pelton R.,

House Committees
Energy & Environment

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING A REQUIREMENT THAT THE COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE**
102 **CONDUCT STUDIES TO ASSESS ADVANCED ENERGY SOLUTIONS IN**
103 **RURAL COLORADO.**

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>.)

The bill requires the director of the Colorado energy office or the director's designee (director) to conduct studies to assess the use of advanced energy solutions in rural Colorado. One study must consider ways to assist northwestern and west end of Montrose county Colorado as it transitions to producing advanced firm dispatchable energy

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.*

resources. The other study must consider the potential for the development of new energy resources in southeastern Colorado. The bill specifies information that the director is required to consider in both studies.

On or before July 1, 2025, the director is required to submit the director's findings and conclusions of both studies to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over energy matters.

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

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 24-38.5-119 as
3 follows:

4 **24-38.5-119. Assessment of advanced energy solutions in rural**
5 **Colorado - northwestern and west end of Montrose county Colorado**
6 **study - southeastern Colorado study - report - legislative declaration**
7 **- definitions - repeal.** (1) (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY FINDS
8 AND DECLARES THAT:

9 (I) COLORADO IS UNDERGOING AN ENERGY TRANSITION;

10 (II) COLORADO'S ENERGY ECONOMY HAS TRADITIONALLY
11 SUPPORTED GOOD-PAYING JOBS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AND THE
12 STUDY OF RELIABLE AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES,
13 INCLUDING GAS GENERATION WITH CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE,
14 GEOTHERMAL, CLEAN HYDROGEN, ADVANCED NUCLEAR, WIND, SOLAR
15 COUPLED WITH STORAGE, LONG DURATION STORAGE, AND TRANSMISSION,
16 IS NECESSARY TO HELP SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ECONOMIES
17 AND TO CREATE JOBS; AND

18 (III) IN ADDITION, FIRM ENERGY RESOURCES CAN HELP LOWER
19 LONG-TERM ELECTRICITY COSTS AND IMPROVE SYSTEM RELIABILITY.

20 (b) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

21 (I) WHILE THIS IS A STATEWIDE TRANSITION, THE COUNTIES OF
22 MOFFAT, RIO BLANCO, AND ROUTT IN NORTHWEST COLORADO, AND

1 ESPECIALLY THE MUNICIPALITIES OF CRAIG AND HAYDEN, HAVE PLAYED
2 A PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT ROLE AS PRODUCERS OF ELECTRIC ENERGY
3 POWERED BY THE BURNING OF COAL FROM NEARBY MINES AND WILL
4 EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF GOOD JOBS AND PROPERTY TAX
5 REVENUE. SIMILARLY, THE WEST END OF THE COUNTY OF MONTROSE IN
6 WESTERN COLORADO, AND ESPECIALLY THE MUNICIPALITIES OF NATURITA
7 AND NUCLA, UNTIL 2019 PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE AS PRODUCERS OF
8 ELECTRIC ENERGY POWERED BY THE BURNING OF COAL FROM A NEARBY
9 MINE AND HAVE ALREADY EXPERIENCED THE LOSS OF GOOD JOBS AND
10 PROPERTY TAX REVENUE AS A THE RESULT OF THIS TRANSITION.

11 (II) AS COLORADO ADVANCES ITS ENERGY TRANSITION, IT IS ALSO
12 CONSIDERING THE EXPANSION OF TRANSMISSION THAT WILL UNLOCK
13 INVESTMENT IN ENERGY SOLUTIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO.
14 RECENT CONSIDERATIONS OF THE EXPANSION OF TRANSMISSION IN
15 SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO INCLUDE A PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
16 DECISION APPROVING AN APPLICATION FOR AN ENERGY COMPANY TO
17 BUILD ITS POWER PATHWAY PROJECT, INCLUDING PROVISIONAL APPROVAL
18 OF A LINE INTO SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO, AND A RECENT AGREEMENT
19 BY ANOTHER ENERGY COMPANY TO STUDY ADDITIONAL TRANSMISSION IN
20 SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO AS PART OF ITS RESOURCE PLANNING.
21 FINALLY, THE OFFICE HAS WORKED WITH A BROAD RANGE OF
22 STAKEHOLDERS TO SUBMIT A CONCEPT PAPER SEEKING FUNDING FROM THE
23 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO FUND STAKEHOLDER WORK
24 AND STUDIES THAT WOULD, IF FUNDED, STUDY ADDITIONAL TRANSMISSION
25 INTO THE SAN LUIS VALLEY AND SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO AS PART OF
26 A REGIONAL TRANSMISSION PROJECT.

27 (III) DUE TO THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES IN NORTHWESTERN AND

1 WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY COLORADO AND SOUTHEASTERN
2 COLORADO AS DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (1)(b), DIRECTING THE
3 COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE TO CONDUCT STUDIES OF ELECTRIC
4 TRANSMISSION AND ADVANCED ENERGY SOLUTIONS TECHNOLOGIES IN
5 NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY COLORADO AND
6 IN SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO WILL HELP ADDRESS THE NEED FOR FIRM
7 ENERGY GENERATION AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL
8 ECONOMIES.

9 (2) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE
10 REQUIRES:

11 (a) "DIRECTOR" MEANS THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OR THE
12 DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE.

13 (b) "OFFICE" MEANS THE COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE CREATED IN
14 SECTION 24-38.5-101.

15 (3) (a) THE DIRECTOR SHALL CONDUCT OR CAUSE TO BE
16 CONDUCTED STUDIES OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND ADVANCED ENERGY
17 SOLUTIONS TECHNOLOGIES, INCLUDING GEOTHERMAL, CLEAN HYDROGEN,
18 ADVANCED NUCLEAR, AND LONG DURATION STORAGE. ONE STUDY MUST
19 FOCUS ON NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY
20 COLORADO, AS SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (3)(b) OF THIS SECTION, AND ONE
21 STUDY MUST FOCUS ON SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO, AS SPECIFIED IN
22 SUBSECTION (3)(c) OF THIS SECTION.

23 (b) **Northwestern and west end of Montrose county Colorado**
24 **study.** IN THE NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY
25 COLORADO STUDY, THE DIRECTOR MUST EXAMINE OR CAUSE TO BE
26 EXAMINED A RANGE OF ADVANCED FIRM DISPATCHABLE ENERGY
27 RESOURCES THAT CAN LEVERAGE EXISTING ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE,

1 INCLUDING EXISTING SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE,
2 TO ASSESS WHICH ALTERNATIVE FIRM ENERGY RESOURCES,
3 TECHNOLOGIES, OR COMBINATION OF RESOURCES, INCLUDING SKILLED
4 WORKERS FROM THE RETIREMENT OF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS, MIGHT
5 BEST PRESERVE OR REPLACE JOBS, PROVIDE NEW TAX REVENUE IN
6 NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY COLORADO, AND
7 HELP ACHIEVE THE STATE'S ENERGY GOALS. THE OFFICE MUST ALSO
8 ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF THOSE RESOURCES ON ELECTRICITY COSTS. IN
9 ADDITION, THE NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY
10 COLORADO STUDY MUST EXAMINE THE ISSUES SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION
11 (4) OF THIS SECTION.

12 (c) **Southeastern Colorado study.** IN THE SOUTHEASTERN
13 COLORADO STUDY, THE DIRECTOR MUST ASSESS OR CAUSE TO BE
14 ASSESSED THE POTENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ENERGY
15 RESOURCES IN SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO. IN ADDITION TO ASSESSING
16 THE DEVELOPMENT OF WIND, SOLAR, AND STORAGE, THE STUDY MUST
17 ALSO CONSIDER A RANGE OF ADVANCED FIRM DISPATCHABLE ENERGY
18 RESOURCES, INCLUDING RESOURCES THAT MAY USE NEW TRANSMISSION
19 INVESTMENTS TO ASSESS WHICH ALTERNATIVE FIRM ENERGY RESOURCES,
20 TECHNOLOGIES, OR COMBINATIONS OF RESOURCES MIGHT BEST PRESERVE
21 JOBS, PROVIDE NEW TAX REVENUE IN SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO, AND
22 HELP ACHIEVE THE STATE'S ENERGY GOALS. IN ADDITION, THE
23 SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO STUDY MUST EXAMINE THE ISSUES SPECIFIED
24 IN SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION.

25 (4) THE NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY
26 COLORADO STUDY AND THE SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO STUDY REQUIRED
27 PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION MUST BOTH INCLUDE AN

1 INVESTIGATION INTO AND AN EVALUATION OF THE FOLLOWING:

2 (a) THE ECONOMICS OF ADVANCED FIRM ENERGY RESOURCES IN

3 THE REGION, INCLUDING:

4 (I) THE ECONOMIC FORECASTS NEEDED TO SUPPORT ADVANCED

5 ENERGY SOLUTIONS GENERATION INTEGRATED WITH OTHER ENERGY

6 SOURCES IN THE REGION;

7 (II) THE TIME FRAME FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF ADVANCED

8 ENERGY SOLUTIONS GENERATION; AND

9 (III) THE IMPACTS AND RISKS OF ADVANCED ENERGY SOLUTIONS

10 GENERATION TO UTILITY RATEPAYERS;

11 (b) METHODS TO PROVIDE NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR

12 HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS TO ASSIST THE REGION IN THE TRANSITION TO

13 ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION, INCLUDING:

14 (I) POTENTIAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS;

15 (II) THE QUANTITY OF POTENTIAL JOBS FOR HIGHLY SKILLED

16 WORKERS;

17 (III) THE LIKELY COMPENSATION THAT THE JOBS WILL PROVIDE;

18 AND

19 (IV) THE SKILL SETS THAT HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS WOULD BE

20 REQUIRED TO HAVE TO BE QUALIFIED TO PERFORM THE JOBS;

21 (c) THE ESTIMATED PROPERTY TAX REVENUE THAT WILL RESULT

22 FROM FIRM ENERGY GENERATION IN THE REGION;

23 (d) THE WAYS IN WHICH THE TRANSITION TO NEW ENERGY

24 RESOURCES CAN HELP UTILITY COMPANIES THAT OPERATE IN THE REGION

25 USE EXISTING CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN PLANT AND TRANSMISSION LINES

26 TO ADVANCE FIRM ENERGY GENERATION;

27 (e) THE REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT IS

1 NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO FIRM POWER GENERATION IN
2 THE REGION, INCLUDING THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDING TO HELP SUPPORT
3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ENERGY RESOURCES IN NORTHWESTERN AND
4 WEST END OF MONTROSE COUNTY COLORADO, AND SOUTHEASTERN
5 COLORADO;

6 (f) THE POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE FEDERAL TAX
7 CREDITS, GRANTS, AND LOANS, INCLUDING PROGRAMS SPECIFICALLY
8 TARGETED TOWARD ENERGY TRANSITION COMMUNITIES, TO SUPPORT
9 ADVANCED ENERGY SOLUTIONS DEPLOYMENT;

10 (g) THE STEPS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN IN THE REGION TO
11 ADVANCE THE POSSIBILITY OF GEOTHERMAL, ADVANCED NUCLEAR, CLEAN
12 HYDROGEN, CARBON CAPTURE NATURAL GAS POWER PLANTS, LONG
13 DURATION ENERGY STORAGE, AND OTHER FIRM ENERGY SOURCES AS PART
14 OF THE CARBON FREE GOALS SET BY COLORADO;

15 (h) WHETHER SCALABLE OR DISPATCHABLE ELECTRICITY FROM
16 ADVANCED NUCLEAR AND OTHER FIRM ENERGY GENERATION SOURCES
17 CAN ENSURE THAT THE ELECTRICAL GRID MAKES OPTIMAL USE OF
18 INTERMITTENT RESOURCES;

19 (i) THE COST IMPLICATIONS FOR POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGY
20 PATHWAYS AND THE IMPACTS OF SUCH TECHNOLOGY PATHWAYS ON
21 UTILITY RATEPAYERS; AND

22 (j) ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT THE DIRECTOR DEEMS
23 NECESSARY.

24 (5) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2025, THE DIRECTOR SHALL SUBMIT THE
25 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END OF
26 MONTROSE COUNTY COLORADO STUDY AND THE SOUTHEASTERN
27 COLORADO STUDY REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION TO THE

1 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND
2 THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY COMMITTEE, OR THEIR
3 SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES. THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS SUBMITTED
4 MUST INCLUDE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDING ADMINISTRATIVE OR
5 LEGISLATIVE ACTION NEEDED TO ASSIST NORTHWESTERN AND WEST END
6 OF MONTROSE COUNTY COLORADO IN THE TRANSITION TO FIRM ENERGY
7 GENERATION SOURCES AND TO ASSIST SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO IN THE
8 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ENERGY RESOURCES.

9 (6) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2026.

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