



SB23-005

LONG TITLE: Concerning measures to expand the forestry workforce, and, in connection therewith, directing the Colorado state forest service to develop educational materials for high school students about career opportunities in forestry and wildfire mitigation; creating a timber, forest health, and wildfire mitigation industries workforce development program to help fund internships in those industries; allocating general fund money to the wildfire mitigation capacity development fund; authorizing the expansion and creation of forestry programs in the community college system and at Colorado mountain college; and directing the state board for community colleges and occupational education to administer a program to recruit wildland fire prevention and mitigation educators.

SHORT TITLE: Forestry and Wildfire Mitigation Workforce

SPONSORS: Senator Jaquez Lewis/Rep. Cutter

COMMITTEES: Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

PURPOSE OF THE BILL: To incentivize the timber industry by creating a workforce development program that will encourage more timber industry staff on the ground and mitigate wildfire.

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS: Fire officials, State Forestry personnel, high schools and technical and community colleges, workforce training programs.

Is the bill necessary this year? There is no deadline, but if there is any opportunity for federal infrastructure money it should be soon

BACKGROUND: The bill is the product of the Wildfire Matters Review Committee.

How does the bill change current law? It creates a workforce development system within the State Forest Service. It directs the establishment of forestry programs in community colleges and mountain colleges and encourages outreach to high students regarding career opportunities.

Does the bill affect the prior appropriation system? No

How is the bill implemented? The treasurer is directed to transfer one million dollars per year to the Wildfire Mitigation Capacity Development Fund to be used for the purposes in the bill. The State Forest Service must develop policies, procedures and guidelines for administering the internship program. Funding is to be directed to community colleges for development of forestry programs and for the purchase of a harvesting simulator, to be shared with other college programs. The bill also provides for the recruitment and training of wildland fire mitigation educators.

Fiscal impact: There is no fiscal note, but one million dollars per year is authorized from the General Fund.

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