



## HB23-1010

**LONG TITLE:** Concerning a task force to study the feasibility of high-altitude water storage in Colorado.

**SHORT TITLE:** Task Force on High-altitude Water Storage

**SPONSORS:** Rep. McLachlan/Sens. Bridges and Simpson

**COMMITTEES:** House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee

**PURPOSE OF THE BILL:** The bill establishes a task force to explore the opportunities for storing additional water at high altitudes in the form of snowpack.

**PROponents OF THE BILL:** This bill originated with the late Rep. Hugh McKean who was looking at additional opportunities for water storage.

**POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS:** Water providers and users

**Is this bill necessary this year?** There is no deadline.

**BACKGROUND:** The bill was considered and adopted by the Water and Agriculture Resources Review Committee in 2022. It was a concept Rep. McKean had talked about for a couple of years. It is unclear whether there is any research on this concept.

**How does the bill change current law?** The establishment of a task force does not change any law.

**Does the bill affect the prior appropriations system?** No

**How is the bill implemented?** If approved the task force would be formed and members appointed. The seven member task force must include: • the State Engineer or a designee; • one Representative and one Senator; • a representative of the ski industry; • a representative of the whitewater rafting industry; • an engineer with knowledge and experience with high-altitude hydrology; and • a representative from the United States Forest Service.

Areas of study must include:

- a) the potential relationship between increased snowmaking and increased water storage;
- b) whether snowmaking represents meaningful storage
- c) the potential benefits of small-scale storage ponds; or tanks in comparison to larger reservoirs; and
- d) a time-benefit analysis that examines the costs, and timeline for increased snowmaking and the siting and construction of a reservoir.

**Practical considerations:** Has this been a topic of previous research? If so, where and when?

**Fiscal Impact:** \$17,473 from the General Fund