



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.

PROPOSERS 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