



SB24-005

SHORT TITLE: Prohibit Landscaping Practices for Water Conservation

LONG TITLE: Concerning the conservation of water in the state through the prohibition of certain landscaping practices.

SPONSORS: Senators Roberts and Simpson/Representatives Story and McLachlan

COMMITTEES: Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

PURPOSE OF THE BILL: To achieve additional water conservation by prohibiting installation of non-functional turf and to protect groundwater by prohibiting installation of artificial turf.

PROPONENTS OF THE BILL: Denver Water, multiple conservation organizations, Colorado River District, League of Women Voters, Pueblo West Metro District, Eagle Water and Sanitation District

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS: Water users, water providers, municipal governments, homeowners' associations, water rights owners

BACKGROUND: Previous legislation incentivized the removal of turf through grants to local governments to pay homeowners. This bill goes further and compliments an Executive Order which prohibits non-functional turf on state properties.

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

How does the bill change current law? Beginning January 1, 2025, the bill prohibits local governments or homeowners' associations from installing, planting, or placing nonfunctional turf, artificial turf, or invasive plant species on any commercial, institutional, or industrial property or transportation corridor. Under this bill and the Executive Order, the Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) must not use prohibited landscaping in construction and renovation projects on state facilities. The bill does not apply to artificial turf on athletic fields. The bill does not apply to individual residential property owners.

Does the bill affect the prior appropriations system? No. It will limit uses to which municipalities can apply water obtained through Water Court and Administrative proceedings, potentially reducing purchases of water.

How is the bill implemented? There does not appear to be any enforcement mechanism or oversight other than through local government (see fiscal impact).

Practical considerations: How will this affect revegetation to reduce runoff and control dust on newly constructed highways and large-scale developments such as office parks?

Fiscal Impact: Primarily to local governments. According to the Fiscal Note, “The bill may increase local government workload and costs in several ways. First, local governments will need to update ordinances and other regulations to reflect the prohibition on artificial turf, and will be required to respond to complaints, investigate potential violations, and take enforcement actions. Second, when undertaking future landscaping projects, local governments may have higher costs to pay for the installation and maintenance of alternative surfaces at their facilities. Some costs to local governments may be offset by implementing and enforcing new fines or fees related to the bill’s restrictions.”

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