

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0078

Forest health grant program.

Sponsored by: Select Water Committee

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to state forestry; creating the forest
2 health grant program; specifying duties of the state
3 forester; creating an account; requiring the attorney
4 general to approve grants; requiring reports; creating an
5 account; providing a sunset date; providing an
6 appropriation; and providing for an effective date.

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8 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

9

10 **Section 1.** W.S. 36-1-601 is created to read:

11

12 ARTICLE 6

13 FOREST HEALTH GRANT PROGRAM

14

15 **36-1-601. Forest health grant program; duties of**
16 **state forester; account created; attorney general approval.**

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2 (a) There is created the forest health grant program.
3 The grant program shall be administered by the state
4 forester, who shall establish the application process and
5 any other requirements of the grant program not otherwise
6 provided by this section.

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8 (b) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of
9 this section, grants under the forest health grant program
10 shall pay for not more than seventy-five percent (75%) of
11 the cost of an eligible forest health project as specified
12 in this subsection. Any other source of funds, cash or
13 in-kind contributions may be used as matching funds to
14 cover the remainder of a project's costs and the state
15 forester may require that matching funds be obligated to
16 pay for a portion of any project. Forest health projects
17 eligible for grant funding under this section shall be
18 conducted on state, federal government, local government or
19 private land, shall be necessary in the public interest and
20 shall be designed to accomplish one (1) or more of the
21 following:

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23 (i) Enhancement of water yield or quality;

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2 (ii) Reduction of the risk of catastrophic
3 wildfire damage;

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5 (iii) Increased production of forest products;

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7 (iv) Improvement of habitat conditions for
8 wildlife and livestock;

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10 (v) Any other project that is beneficial to
11 forest health, that is substantially beneficial to the
12 interest of the state and that has a public purpose as
13 determined by the state forester.

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15 (c) Any grant under the forest health program that is
16 used on federal land shall not pay for more than fifty
17 percent (50%) of the cost of an eligible forest health
18 project as specified under subsection (b) of this section.
19 Any other source of funds, cash or in-kind contributions
20 may be used as matching funds to cover the remainder of a
21 project's costs and the state forester may require that
22 matching funds be obligated to pay for a portion of any
23 project. If a forest health project is conducted through

1 good neighbor authority, receipts collected through
2 implementation of the project may be used as matching funds
3 under this subsection.

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5 (d) No forest health grant shall be made under this
6 section without the written opinion of the attorney general
7 certifying the legality of the grant and all documents
8 connected with the grant and project.

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10 (e) There is created the forest health grant program
11 account. The account shall consist of those funds
12 designated to the account by law. Funds in the account
13 shall be used for grants authorized to be made under this
14 section. Any person may also grant, give, transfer, bequest
15 or donate funds to the account. Funds in the account shall
16 be invested as provided by law. Any funds remaining in the
17 account at the end of any fiscal year shall not lapse or
18 revert as provided by W.S. 9-4-207 but shall remain in the
19 account and be used to implement the purposes of this
20 section. Accrued interest and other earnings on unexpended
21 funds within the forest health grant program account shall
22 be credited to the account.

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1 (f) The state forester shall annually report to the
2 joint agriculture, state and public lands and water
3 resources interim committee not later than September 1 on
4 all grants awarded under this section including the amounts
5 of the grants and the projects the grants were authorized
6 to fund.

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8 (g) No forest health grants under this section shall
9 be approved after July 1, 2030 and any unobligated funds
10 remaining in the forest health grant program account on
11 July 1, 2030 shall:

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13 (i) If the source of the funds were not state
14 funds, be returned, without interest or other earnings, to
15 the person that granted, gave, transferred, bequeathed or
16 donated the funds pursuant to subsection (d) of this
17 section. If there are multiple sources of funds that are
18 not state funds, the funds may be provided on a pro rata
19 basis using the amount of funds available in the account
20 and the amount of funds transferred to the account from
21 each source; or

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(ii) If the source of the funds were state funds, revert to the general fund or other state fund from which the funds were initially appropriated.

Section 2. There is appropriated three million dollars (\$3,000,000.00) from the general fund to the forest health grant program account for purposes of implementing this act and making grants authorized by this act. This appropriation shall not be transferred or expended for any other purpose without further legislative authorization. Notwithstanding W.S. 9-2-1008, 9-2-1012(e) and 9-4-207, this appropriation shall remain in effect and not lapse or revert at the end of any fiscal period except upon further legislative action. It is the intent of the legislature that additional funding for this purpose be included in the state forester's next standard budget request submitted under W.S. 9-2-1013.

Section 3. This act is effective July 1, 2026.

(END)