

**DRAFT ONLY
NOT APPROVED FOR
INTRODUCTION**

HOUSE BILL NO.

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; providing a
5 sunset date; providing an appropriation; and providing for
6 an effective date.

7

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

1

2 **36-1-601. Forest health grant program; duties of**
3 **state forester; account created; attorney general approval.**

4

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

10

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

23

1 (i) Enhancement of water yield or quality;

2

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

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6 (iii) Increased production of forest products;

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

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

15

16 (c) No forest health grant shall be made under this
17 section without the written opinion of the attorney general
18 certifying the legality of the grant and all documents
19 connected with the grant and project.

20

21 (d) There is created the forest health grant program
22 account. The account shall consist of those funds
23 designated to the account by law. Funds in the account

1 shall be used for grants authorized to be made under this
2 section. Any person may also grant, give, transfer, bequest
3 or donate funds to the account. Funds in the account shall
4 be invested as provided by law. Any funds remaining in the
5 account at the end of any fiscal year shall not lapse or
6 revert as provided by W.S. 9-4-207 but shall remain in the
7 account and be used to implement the purposes of this
8 section. Accrued interest and other earnings on unexpended
9 funds within the forest health grant program account shall
10 be credited to the account.

11

12 (e) The state forester shall annually report to the
13 joint agriculture, state and public lands and water
14 resources interim committee not later than September 1 on
15 all grants awarded under this section including the amounts
16 of the grants and the projects the grants were authorized
17 to fund.

18

19 (f) No forest health grants under this section shall
20 be approved after July 1, 2030 and any unobligated funds
21 remaining in the forest health grant program account on
22 July 1, 2030 shall:

23

1 (i) If the source of the funds was not state
2 funds, be returned, without interest or other earnings, to
3 the person that granted, gave, transferred, bequeathed or
4 donated the funds pursuant to subsection (d) of this
5 section. If there are multiple sources of funds that are
6 not state funds, the funds may be provided on a pro rata
7 basis using the amount of funds available in the account
8 and the amount of funds transferred to the account from
9 each source; or

10

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

14

15 **Section 2.** There is appropriated three million
16 dollars (\$3,000,000.00) from the general fund to the forest
17 health grant program account for purposes of implementing
18 this act and making grants authorized by this act. This
19 appropriation shall not be transferred or expended for any
20 other purpose without further legislative authorization.
21 Notwithstanding W.S. 9-2-1008, 9-2-1012(e) and 9-4-207,
22 this appropriation shall remain in effect and not lapse or
23 revert at the end of any fiscal period except upon further

1 legislative action. It is the intent of the legislature
2 that additional funding for this purpose be included in the
3 state forester's next standard budget request submitted
4 under W.S. 9-2-1013.

5

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

7

8 (END)