



JBC Staff Comeback Memos

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JBC Staff Comeback Higher Education

JBC Staff: Alfredo Kemm, (303-866-4549)

Date: March 19, 2026

FY 2025-26 Institutions Tuition and Mandatory Fees true-up

Recommendation

Staff recommends adjustments to institution tuition cash funds and student fees cash funds for FY 2025-26 totaling a net decrease of \$8,239,957 cash funds across governing boards as outlined in the tables that follow.

Analysis

Staff failed to include necessary tuition and student fees true-up adjustments to the FY 2025-26 base appropriation as part of FY 2026-27 figure setting recommendations.

These items are cash fund appropriations. The tuition adjustment is made using the Legislative Council Staff forecast and the student fees are from updated data provided by the Department of Higher Education (DHE). The student fees portion is included as an informational appropriation only.

The following table outlines the adjustments for tuition.

FY 2025-26 Institution Tuition Cash Funds True-up

	FY 2025-26 Tuition Appropriation	FY 2025-26 LCS Forecast Tuition Revenue Estimate	2026 Long Bill add-on adjustment for FY 2025-26
Adams State	\$25,204,933	\$24,283,862	-\$921,071
Mesa U	89,579,790	87,142,894	-2,436,896
Metro State	111,115,755	115,733,851	4,618,096
Western CO	22,853,626	21,419,000	-1,434,626
CO State	578,917,328	553,486,698	-25,430,630
Fort Lewis	47,706,975	44,598,343	-3,108,632
Univ of CO	1,417,388,775	1,415,713,881	-1,674,894
Mines	228,524,019	227,336,581	-1,187,438
Northern CO	75,053,590	74,764,265	-289,325
Comm Colleges	346,363,087	358,666,414	12,303,327
Gov Boards Subtotal	\$2,942,707,878	\$2,923,145,789	-\$19,562,089

The following table outlines the adjustments for student fees.

FY 2025-26 Institution Student Fees Cash Funds True-up

	FY 2025-26 Student Fees Appropriation	FY 2025-26 DHE Student Fees Estimate	2026 Long Bill add-on adjustment for FY 2025-26
Adams State	\$3,907,170	\$3,876,238	-\$30,932
Mesa U	7,417,281	7,437,395	20,114
Metro State	37,204,281	35,712,080	-1,492,201
Western CO	5,443,953	5,336,806	-107,147
CO State	88,221,450	90,005,930	1,784,480
Fort Lewis	6,470,091	7,416,825	946,734
Univ of CO	72,300,000	82,917,175	10,617,175
Mines	26,784,673	26,784,673	0
Northern CO	16,984,810	17,108,286	123,476
Comm Colleges	19,798,511	19,258,944	-539,567
Gov Boards Subtotal	\$284,532,220	\$295,854,352	\$11,322,132

JBC Staff Comeback

Natural Resources

JBC Staff: Kelly Shen, (303-866-5434)

Date: March 19, 2026

Wolves

During figure setting, the Committee discussed separating expenses for wolf reintroduction (specifically, introducing new wolves) into its own line item. The expenses are currently combined with other wildlife-related expenses in the “Wildlife Operations” line item. The Committee also delayed action on the corresponding wolf-related RFI.

If the committee wants to proceed with a new line item, staff recommends the following:

1. **A new line item** called “Gray Wolf Reintroduction” with a footnote to clarify the General Assembly’s intent to allow any unused funds to be used for producer compensation and wolf conflict minimization
2. **An updated RFI** pertaining to conflict minimization and actual wolf-related expenditures

New Line Item and Footnote

Separating wolf reintroduction expenses into its own line item could allow for increased transparency and clarity on the funds used for wolf reintroduction. The Department disagrees, indicating that the appropriation already has multiple wolf-related footnotes that guide spending and there are already multiple statutory reports/RFI’s related to wolves. There already exists:

- Footnote that specifies \$2.1 million General Fund may be used for wolf reintroduction and management
- Footnote that specifies the General Assembly’s intent that funds for wolf reintroduction and management should not be spent on future wolf reintroduction until all state funded preventative measures are implemented to the highest degree possible
- Annual depredation compensation report¹
- Annual progress update on the reintroduction, including general status, estimated survival rates, why survival rate is lower than expected (if applicable), and recovery goals and anticipated timelines²
- Proposed wolf-related RFI continuation (see next section that discussed RFI language)

The Department has indicated that their strong preference is to **not** create a new line item, but instead to rely on reporting for transparency and clarity.

However, the Department also provided information on the appropriate amount of funding if the new line item (for reintroduction only) were to be created. The Department recommends an appropriation of \$450,000

¹ Section 33-1-128 (5)(a), C.R.S.

² Section 33-2-105.7 (4), C.R.S.

General Fund. This is higher than the wolf reintroduction estimate used in S.B. 25B-005 that reduced the Department’s available funding for wolf reintroduction by \$264,268.

The Department indicates that the \$264,268 estimate was based on the expenses from the first capture operation in British Columbia, which was a “best-case” capture scenario. The Department proposed a higher appropriation for the new line item in order to ensure adequate funds for a less-than-ideal capture scenario (e.g., due to weather delays or other complications).

Staff believes that this increased appropriation is reasonable and recommends it to the committee. However, to ensure that the Department maintains flexibility and adequate funding to support producers – **staff also recommends a footnote on the proposed new line item “Gray Wolf Reintroduction”.** The footnote would specify the General Assembly’s intent that any funds not used for reintroduction could be used for conflict minimization and producer compensation.

Staff also wants to flag that while separating funds out for wolf reintroduction to a new line item provides a layer of additional visibility, the Department is still able to spend from the “Wildlife Operations” line on wolf reintroduction.

Request for Information

During figure setting, staff recommended **CONTINUING AND MODIFYING** the following request for information.

The Committee had concerns about the proposed changes to the RFI. Staff recommended the changes to avoid duplicative work, as the Department is already reporting on conflict minimization metrics as part of their annual Gray Wolf Report. The Department indicates that retaining items #1 through 5 would result in approximately six hours of additional work. Four hours would be spent compiling data and drafting the response, and two hours would be needed for staff and management review.

If the Committee still wishes to proceed with all of the metrics below (#1 through 7), then staff recommends, at a minimum, changing:

- Moving the report due date to November 1, 2026 instead of quarterly
- Moving the reporting time frame to cover the entire previous fiscal year (FY 2025-26), instead of a few months of the year
- Adjusting metric #7 to focus on wolf introduction and management, not just wolf reintroduction

These changes would better align with JBC budget timelines, and provide updated information at a time when it is most useful for budget decision-making.

Proposed RFI language

N Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Operations, Wildlife Operations – ~~On June 10, 2025 and September 10, 2025~~ November 1, 2026, the Division of Parks and Wildlife is requested to provide the Joint Budget Committee with a report ~~including progress on preventative measures to reduce wolf-livestock conflict outlined during the Parks and Wildlife Commission’s denial of a citizen petition to halt wolf reintroduction on January 8, 2025, and~~ information on whether the Department of Natural Resources has spent or is planning to spend state

funding on new wolf releases. This progress update should, at a minimum, include the following information:

- ~~1. The total number of range riders placed across the state, by month and in which counties;~~
- ~~2. Detail on the composition and activities of depredation response operation teams, and the areas that they are responsible for;~~
- ~~3. The number of and types of additional nonlethal conflict techniques implemented;~~
- ~~4. The number of site assessments conducted by month;~~
- ~~5. The number of community members assisted by Department of Agriculture or Department of Natural Resources carcass management programs;~~
6. Information on whether the Department of Natural Resources has expended funds on new wolf releases; and
7. The amount of money that the Division of Parks and Wildlife has spent related to wolf reintroduction AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COSTS every month, separated by purpose (personal services, operating, wolf compensation, and conflict minimization).

~~The June report should include information from January 1, 2025 through April 30, 2025. The report should include information from January 1, 2025 through July 31, 2025 July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.~~

RFI: Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) cash funds

Most cash funds in the Department, both annually and continuously appropriated, submit a Schedule 9 Cash Fund Report.

The Healthy Forests and Vibrant Communities Cash Fund, part of the Colorado State Forest Service, does not. As such, staff recommends an RFI for this cash fund and all continuously appropriated funds in the Colorado State Forest Service. The RFI should cover information typically provided in a Schedule 9.

Proposed RFI language

- N Department of Natural Resources, Colorado State Forest Service – On November 1 every year, the Department is requested to provide the Joint Budget Committee with cash fund details for all continuously appropriated cash funds in the Colorado State Forest Service. The details should include data from the past two completed fiscal years, the current fiscal year, and projections for the upcoming two fiscal years. The report should cover all items in a typical Schedule 9 Budget Report, such as:
- Beginning fund balance, assets and liabilities (separated by long-term vs. short-term), net cash assets (and also net cash assets without existing grant/contract obligations), and a cash flow summary (revenue and expenditures separated by source).

The report should also include the number of FTE supported by each fund, separated by fiscal year.

JBC Staff Comeback

Public Health and Environment

JBC Staff: Kelly Shen, (303-866-5434)

Date: March 19, 2026

Laboratory RFI

When the Committee approved funds for the state laboratory as part of their R1 request, staff recommended and the Committee approved a quarterly RFI that shows:

- Customer-focused metrics (e.g., turnaround time, service interruptions)
- Organizational metrics (e.g., vacancy rates and for which roles)
- A progress report on how the lab is spending newly approved state funds in FY 25-26 and FY 26-27, as well as the total lab operating budget.

The Department has indicated that they are open to working with the Committee on RFI language, but has not provided any input. Staff proposes the below language.

Proposed RFI language

N Department of Public Health and Environment, Division of Disease Control and Public Health Response, Laboratory Services – On June 1, September 1, and December 1, 2026, the Department is requested to provide updates on laboratory spending and key performance indicators for the state laboratory. At a minimum, the update should include:

1. For FY 25-26 and as much as possible in FY 26-27, the amount spent on and activities performed by recently approved contract funding. This should be broken out by (1) the quality assurance/risk management system for the entire lab, (2) the quality system for the chemistry section, and (3) historical data analysis.
2. For FY 25-26 and as much as possible in FY 26-27, the total lab operating budget separated by fund source (GF, CF, RF, FF). This should include funds spent from line items outside of the Laboratory Services Division.
3. An organizational chart that shows filled and vacant positions by lab unit, especially for positions approved in the FY 2026-27 R1 budget request.
4. Key performance indicators. For the time period beginning July 1, 2026 –
 - Turnaround times separated by testing category and by month
 - Courier metrics separated by month – numbers of samples carried, number of samples that were invalid, and number of samples that met vs. did not meet temperature control requirements
 - Equipment downtime – the number of times equipment went offline, for what reason, and for how long
 - Service interruptions – the number of times the lab suspended a particular service offered or lost certification, for what reason, and for how long

Note Regarding OSPB Comeback

Staff also just wants to note that the mechanics of OSPB's laboratory comeback (specifically for an instrument replacement fund) are unclear and not recommended by staff.

The R1 request asked for the "fund" to be created by adding General Fund to an existing line item "Chemistry and Microbiology Operating Expenses" – which could be spent on any number of laboratory operating expenses that are not instruments. If the committee approves the comeback, staff instead recommends a new, separate line item. This would align with similar funds in other departments.

Colorado HIV and AIDS Prevention Grant Program (CHAPP) Funding

During figure setting, the Committee approved an adjustment to all tobacco-funded programs to align with the tobacco forecast. For the CHAPP program, this was a \$1,316,682 million reduction from the AIDS and HIV Prevention Fund. This large reduction was due to a combination of a reduced MSA revenue forecast and reduced cash fund balance estimate.

The currently approved cash fund appropriation for CHAPP program operating expenses is \$2,419,659 from the AIDS and HIV Prevention Fund.

A few days ago, the Department alerted JBC staff that the approved appropriation would not be sufficient to accommodate their planned FY 2026-27 expenses. In November 2025, the CHAPP Advisory Council approved a 15.0 percent carryforward for grantees in the current year, estimated to be \$531,248. This was done to spread the impact of lower than expected revenue across multiple years.

Staff recommends the requested \$531,248 increase from the AIDS and HIV Prevention Fund. This appropriation does not impact the amount of revenue coming into the fund, but would allow any unused funds from FY 25-26 (the projected carryforward from grantees) to instead be spent in FY 26-27.