

## Department of Planning and Budget 2024 Session Fiscal Impact Statement

**1. Bill Number:** HB538

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrolled

**2. Patron:** Cole

**3. Committee:** Education

**4. Title:** Virginia Student Environmental Literacy Plan Grant Fund and Program established.

**5. Summary:** Requires the Office of Environmental Education within the Department of Conservation and Recreation (the Department), in conjunction with the Department of Education and any other stakeholder that it deems appropriate, to implement the Virginia Student Environmental Literacy Plan Grant Program and Fund for school districts to develop local student environmental literacy plans and, with consultation from the Department of Education, to maintain a state environmental literacy plan. The bill establishes the Program and Fund, to be administered by the Office, for the purpose of awarding grants on a competitive basis to any local school board that seeks assistance to initiate, expand, or improve teacher professional development opportunities or student environmental education programs that align with the content and objectives of the bill.

**6. Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes, to capitalize the new fund. See item 8.

**7. Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary.

**8. Fiscal Implications:** This bill creates a new fund in the state treasury called the Virginia Student Environmental Literacy Plan Grant Fund. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR, in consultation with the Department of Education (DOE), is tasked with managing and administering the Fund. To capitalize the Fund, an appropriation is required. The bill does not identify a funding source.

The provisions of the bill do not allow DCR or DOE to disburse from the Fund reasonable costs and expenses incurred in administration and management of the Fund. As such, depending on the size and scope of the program, additional resources may be required. Both DCR and DOE anticipate the need of one full-time position each to administer the provisions of the bill and provide oversight of the grant funds. The bill requires that DCR and DOE develop and maintain a state environmental literacy plan, and to ensure that such plan aligns with current statutes and Standards of Learning, expertise is required to collaborate and develop the plan. DCR anticipates a cost of one FTE at \$143,000 per year from the general fund, and DOE anticipates the costs of one FTE at \$146,362 per year from the general fund.

**9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Conservation and Recreation; Department of Education.

**10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

**11. Other Comments:** None.