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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/3/09

SPONSOR Hall LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB 193

SHORT TITLE NMSU Sevilleta Field Station Support SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Haug

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$200.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)  
 Department of Game and Fish (DGF)  
 University of New Mexico (UNM)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 193 appropriates \$200.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for operational support of UNM's field station at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states that this request was on the list of priority projects submitted by the UNM to the HED for review, but was not included in the department's funding recommendation for FY09. It is not recommended for funding for FY10, regardless whether the State's fiscal picture improves.

The LFC Appropriation Recommendations, Volume II, pages 364-365 states:

With respect to special projects, higher education institutions advanced 114 proposals for new projects and expansions at a total general fund cost of \$54 million during the HED budget request process in fall 2008. The committee has concerns about the growth of research and public service projects within the higher education budget, as well as the alignment of these projects with state goals and strategic plans. The committee also continues to have significant concerns about accountability and performance outcomes for these projects.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

The Executive Budget in Brief notes that over the years more than 300 RPSPs have been created, accounting for a large portion of institution budgets. The current RPSPs were reviewed while considering the relevance of the project to the core mission of the institution, the community benefit and the outcomes associated with each project. (Budget in Brief and Policy Highlights, P 9-10.)

UNM states that:

This funding will enable the expansion of current education and outreach programs at the field station, as well as provide the opportunity for the creation of new initiatives.

One of the programs that will expand with the new funding is the Ecohydrogeology in the Middle Rio Grande Environment (E-MRGE) program, which sends UNM grad students into local middle schools to assist teachers in developing science curriculum. The UNM students also serve as mentors for the teachers and their students. The program is currently active in four middle schools in Socorro, Belen, and the Laguna Pueblo. The additional FTE's in this request will allow E-MRGE to expand into more schools.

Course offerings at the field station that will grow substantially with new funding. These class offerings are weeklong immersion classes over the summer and are designed for K12 teachers. The first class, a seminar in Geobotany, was attended by K12 teachers from across the state, including Albuquerque, Socorro, Belen, Santa Fe, Roswell, and Lovington.

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

The bill title refers to NMSU. The appropriation is actually to UNM, which operates the Sevilleta facility.

GH/mc