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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/26/9

SPONSOR Lopez LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Develop Regional Health Profiles SJM 46

ANALYST Chabot

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY09	FY10	FY11	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>		\$56.4	\$56.4	\$112.8	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB 223, Study Uranium Contamination Health Effects

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

New Mexico Health Policy Commission (HPC)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 46 resolves that DOH:

- Compile data and develop regional health profiles for three specific vulnerable geographic areas of New Mexico: the uranium belt (Pueblos of Laguna and Acoma, Grants, Milan, Ambrosia Lake, Crownpoint and Church Rock; within a 20 mille radius of Mesquite; and the community of Mountain View;
- Accumulate available, existing environmental health data from state and federal research institutions, advocacy and nonprofit environmental health organizations and state and federal government agencies with information on environmental health issues and industry experts;
- Compiled data be recorded in a detailed and descriptive manner identifying specific health conditions found to be related to environmental conditions and death certificates recorded by DOH; and
- The recorded data is available and used to inform environmental health policy and planning decisions.

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

This joint memorial has no appropriation but will have considerable costs associated with its completion. DOH states it will need to hire an additional epidemiologist to complete the assessments and develop profiles for an estimated cost of \$56.4 thousand per year. In addition, there will be costs for developing a database for collecting information, office space, data processing, profile development, printing and distribution of information. Another decision effecting cost is whether this is to be a one-time project or a continuous effort which would make it a recurring cost. Based on current revenue projections, this cost would have to be absorbed by DOH in its operating budget.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

DOH summarizes the environmental health issues in the three areas as follows:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Environmental Justice has suggested one of the necessary elements that New Mexico must commit to in order to accomplish environmental justice is to integrate data collection, analysis and monitoring tools to assess the needs of, and analyze the potential impacts on minority and low-income populations.

The Mountain View community has two Superfund sites, the majority of Bernalillo county's Brownfield sites, many small industrial businesses, and a shallow aquifer challenged by septic tanks, industrialization, and traditional farming practices (UNM, New Mexico EPHT Final Performance Report, 2006). The median household income of the Mountain View community was reported to be \$32,000 in 2005 and was 73 percent Hispanic or Latino (South Valley Partners for Environmental Justice Report to the Community, 2005). Environmental health concerns in the community range from water and air quality issues, noise, land development and use, crime, and the use of pesticides.

The un-remediated radioactive and hazardous waste piles from past uranium exploration, mining, and milling activities continue to present a threat to the health and well-being of residents of northwestern New Mexico through multiple exposure sources and pathways, including drinking contaminated water, breathing contaminated air, and eating contaminated agricultural crops, produce and livestock. Livestock are particularly vulnerable due to the amount of soil they ingest while grazing, in addition to ingestion of contaminated stock pond water and pasture grasses. Livestock that grazed in the mining areas were found to have hazardous levels of radioactive and other contaminants in their edible organs and muscle tissue.

(Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Uranium Tox Profile <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp150.html> ).

Long-term exposures to elevated levels of uranium and other metals can result in kidney damage, neurological impairment, and may contribute to the increased occurrence of chronic diseases such as diabetes. Kidney damage is the primary health effect of ingested high uranium levels over long periods of time, such as several months or years. Neurotoxicity of both the peripheral and central nervous systems can result from even low levels of human exposure to metals associated with uranium processing including lead, manganese, and arsenic. Neurobehavioral and developmental effects in children have been associated with very low levels of exposure to these metals (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; Casarett and Doull's toxicology : the basic science of poisons / editor, Curtis D. Klaassen, editors emeriti, Mary O.

### **Senate Joint Memorial– Page 3**

Amdur, John Doull New York : McGraw-Hill, Health Professions Division, 1996 Edition 5th ed

The communities around Mesquite are largely agricultural with crops and large dairies predominating. Other environmental health concerns include flooding, agro industry, and arsenic in water, ambient dust and air pollution.

Ninety-five percent of the population of Mesquite is Hispanic or Latino with the majority claiming to be of Mexican origin. Almost 100 percent speak a language other than English in the home. Poverty is high with 38 percent of families at poverty status in 1999 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census).

Causes of death on the death certificate are coded according to the tenth revision of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). The International Classification of Diseases is a system of classification developed in partnership with the World Health Organization and WHO Collaborating Centers. WHO member nations are required to use this classification system for comparability in the collection and classification of health statistics.

HPC would like to participate in this project. It maintains the New Mexico Health Information System which is a database that collects, analyzes, and disseminates health data and information for use in health planning and policy development.

EMNRD assess the development of a regional health profile for the uranium belt would provide a succinct summary of health facts that could have a positive or negative effect on the promotion of uranium development on reclamation activities. This would be dependent on whether or not the regional profile showed that uranium was clearly linked as an environmental condition to specific health conditions.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

DOH states additional personnel would be required to assess the health data, complete the analysis and compile the profiles over a one to two year period.

### **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS**

1. Is this a one-time project or is it to be continually updated?
2. How will these profiles be used?

GAC/mc