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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/01/13

SPONSOR Papen LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE NMSU Water Resource Research SB 244

ANALYST Roberts

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY13	FY14		
	\$125.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicate of General Appropriation Act: New Mexico State University

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)  
New Mexico State University (NMSU)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 244 appropriates \$125 thousand dollars from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU) to support water resource research.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$125 thousand dollars contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2014 shall revert to the general fund.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED reports that NMSU submitted a request for the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (NMWRI) as a FY14 Research and Public Services Project. NMSU's funding request to the HED for review in the amount of \$336,200 was an increase of \$125,000, or a 59 percent, from last fiscal year. HED's funding recommendation for the department was

submitted to the DFA and LFC on November 1, 2012. The HED recommended no increase to the FY13 \$211,200 in funding requested for this project. Neither the executive nor the LFC included this base recommendation request. Passage of this bill would increase the FY14 funding for NMWRRI to \$336,200 or a 59 percent increase.

NMSU cites that the NMWRRI was established in 1963 by the NMSU's Board of Regents, becoming the first of 54 state institutions approved nationwide under the authorization of the 1964 Water Resources Research Act. In 2005, the Legislature gave NMWRRI statutory authority (NMSA 1978 21-8-40). Additionally, they are authorized as New Mexico's state water institute under the federal Water Resources Research Act in 1964. This bill significantly impacts water-related programs at NMSU, University of New Mexico and New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology as these institutions are the major recipients of faculty water research grants. In addition, Eastern New Mexico University and New Mexico Highlands University also receive student water research grants from the institute.

The NMWRRI is a statewide institute serving all of New Mexico's universities. All higher education in the state is impacted by its programs. The expansion funding will help to meet new water challenges by expanding the statewide mandate and broadening water research opportunities throughout New Mexico, particularly by funding more graduate and undergraduate research efforts.

About 86 percent of New Mexico is classified with moderate drought conditions and a more severe drought category. Because water resources are so limited, the highest quality research is essential to solving the water quality and water resources management issues.

The NMWRRI has sustained substantial reductions in state appropriations over the past few years. These cuts have resulted in a reduction in staff and reduced ability to fund faculty and student research projects, as well as severely limiting the institute's information dissemination program and the operations of the GIS laboratory and reference room. An ongoing goal is to increase funding that will enable NMWRRI to resume its former full suite of programs to meet New Mexico water challenges.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The Board of Regents of New Mexico State University would be responsible for administering the funds to support water resource research.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

NMSU cites that the NMWRRI's level of activity depends on state funding, and consequences of not funding this expansion request include: reduction of the institute's research program, thereby not meeting New Mexico's water needs; elimination of student research grants that help train the state's future water professionals; reduction of GIS and mapping services; and reduction to information dissemination activities.