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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Egolf ORIGINAL DATE 2/18/15
 LAST UPDATED _____ HM 56

SHORT TITLE Study Herbicide and Autism and Food Safety SB _____

ANALYST Klundt

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	\$0	\$12.0	\$0	\$12.0	Nonrecurring	Federal

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 56 requests the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and the Department of Health (DOH) to (1) evaluate research on the alleged correlation between an increased use of chemicals as Roundup/glyphosates and the increase in autism spectrum diagnoses, and the safety of foods so treated, (2) estimate any impact and future risks which may occur if there is a causative link, and (3) present findings to Legislative Health and Human Services Committee and Legislative Interim Committee on Water and Natural Resources.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

DOH reports that similar reviews as requested by this memorial conducted by the agency required eight epidemiologists to spend 595 hours (14.9 weeks). The estimated cost for conducting that study, given an average of \$20 per hour salary, was \$11.9 thousand. Additionally, DOH notes agency epidemiologists are funded through federal funds and funding stipulate that 100 percent of staff time must be spent on grant deliverables.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges. There are no known exact causes of ASD; however, research suggests many different factors such as genetics, environmental, and biologic factors could play a role. (See, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/facts.html>)

A survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network estimated that one in 68 children has been identified with ASD, with boys being four to five times at higher risk than girls. ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. (See, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>.)

The National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) noted that the environmental risk factors in autism can involve events before and after birth. They may include, but are not limited to prenatal exposure to air pollution, maternal obesity or diabetes, and prenatal exposure to certain pesticides. However, these factors are unlikely to cause ASD. Rather, these factors likely increase a child's chances for developing ASD, when combined with genetic factors. https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/autism_and_the_environment_508.pdf

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide used on many food and non-food crops as well as non-crop areas such as roadsides. (See, <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/glyphosate.cfm#one>).

Additionally, foods can be engineered to contain glyphosate.

Genetic engineering (GE)/modification (GM) refers to certain methods that scientists use to introduce new traits or characteristics to an organism. For example, plants, such as soybeans, may be genetically engineered to produce characteristics that enhance the growth or nutritional value of food crops. Soybeans have been modified to be tolerant to commercially relevant levels of the non-selective herbicide glyphosate. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), they use a science-based approach to regulate foods and ingredients made from genetically engineered/modified plants to help ensure that they are safe to eat. FDA regulates food from GE/GM crops in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (See, <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm352067.htm>).

Currently, CYFD participates on a Behavioral Health Collaborative workgroup on autism, which focuses on service delivery to those who have an autism diagnosis. This workgroup however, does not focus on the factors contributing to autism, and CYFD states the agency has no expertise in conducting chemical research.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HM 56 relates to the DOH FY14 Strategic Plan Goal 1: Improve Health Outcomes for the People of New Mexico.

KK/je/aml