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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sanchez, C **ORIGINAL DATE** 03/10/15
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____

SHORT TITLE Abandoned Uranium Mine Reclamation **SM** 102/aSCONC

ANALYST McReynolds

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY15	FY16		
NFI	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates: SB 251, HB 102

Relates to: SB 610, HB494, HB 566 and HM 82.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SCONC Amendment

The Senate Conservation Committee amendment strikes the word “no” on page 2, line 24 of the bill changing the line to read “...public land where there is record of uranium production”.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Memorial 102 requests that the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) develop a program to identify steps needed for the reclamation of abandoned New Mexican uranium mines. SM 102 further requests that EMNRD estimate reclamation costs when federal or other funding becomes available and keep the New Mexico Congressional Delegation apprised of issues related to the legacy of abandoned uranium mines, the results of surveyed sites and funding needs for reclamation.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The response from EMNRD states, “EMNRD has already taken steps to assess abandoned

uranium mines, the program in SM 102 will require minimal additional resources for the agency.”

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

EMNRD reports that from the 1950s to the early 1980s, New Mexico was the largest producer of uranium in the world. During these years, there were few requirements that uranium mines be reclaimed. The Mining and Minerals Division (MMD) has compiled an inventory of approximately 260 closed mines where uranium production occurred. Of these 260 mines, more than half (most of which are smaller, older mines), have not been reclaimed. MMD’s Abandoned Mine Lands Program (which is federally funded) is addressing some of these while many of the more recent, larger mines are being reclaimed under current regulatory programs.

MMD has developed a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Prioritization Model to examine various methods of ranking abandoned uranium mines assessed thus far.

EMNRD and the New Mexico Environment Department are already currently working with federal agencies to use federal funds and funds from bankruptcy settlements to pursue reclamation at certain New Mexican uranium mines.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

MMD would continue its development of the uranium program, cataloging uranium mine sites and addressing reclamation costs and methods.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to SB 251 which seeks funding for uranium cleanups, and duplicates HM 102. Also Relates to other uranium mining and cleanup and study legislation: SB 610, HB494, HB 566 and HM 82.

KM/aml/je