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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sanchez LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 1/21/24
BILL
SHORT TITLE Rangeland Pest Mitigation Program NUMBER House Bill 173
ANALYST Jorgensen

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY24	FY25	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	\$500.0	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

Agency Analysis Received From
New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)
Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 173

House Bill 173 appropriates \$500 thousand from the general fund to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture housed at New Mexico State University for the purpose of administering a rangeland pest mitigation program in FY25 and FY26.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, or May 15, 2024, if enacted.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$500 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY26 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

NMDA reports:

New Mexico's private, state, federal, tribal trust, and tribal rangelands periodically experience outbreaks of forage-feeding insects, primarily range caterpillar and grasshopper

species. Control of outbreaks preserves forage for livestock and wildlife, preserves annual contribution to the rangeland seed bank, limits geographical expansion of outbreaks to adjacent rangeland during the current and in the subsequent year, aids in erosion control in sensitive areas, and contributes to sustainable rangeland health. Preservation of forage is important to beef production economics, especially during extended periods of drought.

During CY2023, a grasshopper outbreak was identified on approximately 25,000 acres of New Mexico's state, federal and privately owned rangelands. [The U.S. Department of Agriculture] USDA was invited by ranchers and participated in managing the program. To address a funding shortfall, ranchers elected to cover the costs associated with grasshopper control on state-owned leased rangelands. Timing issues prevented USDA from implementing control measures in CY2023, resulting in the continuation of grasshopper feeding, hatching and egg laying. It is anticipated that USDA's inability to initiate grasshopper control measures in CY2023 may significantly increase the chances of a subsequent outbreaks in the following years. Funding addressed in HB173 will support ranchers' efforts to address costs associated with grasshopper control programs involving private and possibly state-owned leased rangelands.

CJ/al/hg