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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 96

SHORT TITLE: Space Commission Working Group

SPONSOR: Hochman-Vigil/Dow/Hernandez, J

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: 1/23/2026 **DATE:** 1/21/2026 **ANALYST:** Francis

APPROPRIATION*
(dollars in thousands)

FY26	FY27	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	200.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Spaceport Authority
Economic Development Department
Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Agency or Agencies That Were Asked for Analysis but did not Respond

New Mexico Governor's Office
Department of Finance and Administration

SUMMARY

House Bill 96 (HB96) appropriates \$200 thousand from the general fund to Economic Development Department (EDD) for the purpose of setting up the space commission working group made up of five members. The governor, lieutenant governor, and House Speaker appoint one member each, and the remaining two are appointed by agreement of at least two of the governor, lieutenant governor, and House Speaker. Priority in assessing candidates will be for those with experience in the space and aviation industry. Members serve for undefined terms at the pleasure of the appointment officer. EDD will provide administrative backing, including one staff member to support the working group.

The working group will prepare and present a report on the establishment of a Space Commission by October 1, 2026.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, which is May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the general fund. The appropriation funds EDD to support the working group.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Overlap with the Technology and Innovation Network Advisory Board. Laws 2025, Chapter 133 (House Bill 20) created the Technology and Innovation Division (TIO) and the technology and innovation network advisory board. The working group and the goals outlined in HB96 may be duplicative to the duties of the existing network advisory board. Of note, Chapter 133 already identifies aerospace and space as one of the target sectors.

The advisory board established in Laws 2025, Chapter 133 is responsible for providing guidance and recommendations on the strategic planning and engagement of TIO. The board includes two representatives with expertise in aerospace and space. Additionally, the advisory board consists of subcommittees that develop sector-specific metrics and goals, which could include aerospace and space. The existing technology and innovation advisory board could create a space and aerospace subcommittee to identify key stakeholders and develop a strategic plan, negating the need for an additional working group as prescribed in HB96.

Chapter 133 tasks the TIO with supporting the ecosystems of the target sectors, providing program staff to serve as liaisons to target sector ecosystems, developing a statewide technology and innovation strategic plan. These duties are similar to the duties outlined in HB96 for the working group. In FY26, the TIO had an operating budget of \$6.3 million and a staff of 9 FTE.

Similar Commissions in Other States. The New Mexico Spaceport Authority (NMSA) reports that such a commission that organizes statewide initiatives to promote growth in the industry would be beneficial to the authority and recommends the working group also conduct a review of other states that have similar commissions, particularly Texas, Colorado, Florida, and Arizona.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor (LGO) notes that while the NMSA focuses on Spaceport America, a permanent commission could focus on broader statewide policy in this area.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

EDD is concerned required support for the working group may be a burden on existing staff and hiring an FTE for such a short time would be difficult. If passed, the bill would go into effect May 2026, giving the agency less than six months to hire an FTE, get members appointed, and publish a report. EDD recommends hiring a contractor to support the working group would be more practical. However, the technology and innovation network advisory board already receives staff support from TIO.