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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 178

SHORT TITLE: Sun Shades for Rural Parks and Recreation

SPONSOR: Mason

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 2/2/2026 **ANALYST:** Hilla

APPROPRIATION*
(dollars in thousands)

FY26	FY27	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
\$3,000.0		Nonrecurring	General fund

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT*
(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
DOH	\$114.0	\$114.0	\$114.0	\$342.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund
Total	\$114.0	\$114.0	\$114.0	\$342.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Department of Health

Agency or Agencies That Declined to Respond

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 178

House Bill 178 (HB178) appropriates \$3 million to the Department of Health (DOH) to contract for services for the construction and installation of protective shade structures in rural parks and other outdoor public-use recreation areas. HB178 intends to reduce exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. DOH shall prioritize projects that lack existing shade and have significant UV radiation exposure risk.

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 \$3 million contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of any fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund, allowing DOH to expend the appropriation until all funding has been utilized. This appropriation is not in the LFC nor the Executive budget recommendations for the department.

DOH anticipates that it will expend the appropriation by FY28, which the department estimates an additional \$342 thousand impact on its operating budget, though it would not be a recurring impact.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DOH notes that heat-related illnesses and most skin cancers are largely preventable. Shade structures called for by HB178 reduce direct UV exposure and mitigate the risk of skin cancers and other heat-related illnesses. A 2020 New Mexico epidemiology report estimated that the number of hospitalizations and emergency department visits for heat-related illnesses would double by 2030. DOH notes that in 2023, there was a 49 percent increase in heat-related emergency department visits compared to the summer the year before. The department notes that the lack of shaded infrastructure in public parks is often felt more in rural communities.

However, the department notes that while it supports the health benefits of shade in public places, DOH is not the best agency to implement infrastructure projects outlined in HB178. DOH primarily deals with health data and state facilities for residential and outpatient care and not contract services for construction. Rather than appropriate funding to DOH, an appropriation could be made to the Local Government Division at the Department of Finance and Administration, which would be better equipped at allocating the funding to local governments and identifying rural areas with the most sun shade infrastructure need.

ANA/SEC/cf