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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR <u>Ortez</u>	LAST UPDATED <u>2/7/2024</u>
SHORT TITLE <u>Pollinator Protection Plan Work Group</u>	ORIGINAL DATE <u>1/31/24</u>
	BILL NUMBER <u>House Memorial 33/aHAAWC</u>
	ANALYST <u>Gaussoin</u>

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT*

(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY24	FY25	FY26	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal		Nonrecurring	Other state funds

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HAAWC Amendment to House Memorial 33

The House Agriculture, Acequias and Water Resources Committee amendment to House Memorial 33 provides that the working group develop a pollinator protection plan rather than just consider the plan proposed by the New Mexico Beekeepers Association and broadens the membership of the working group to include “other interested parties.”

Synopsis of Original House Memorial 33

House Memorial 33 (HM33) requests the state Department of Agriculture (NMDA) to convene a working group with representatives of NMDA, the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, and the New Mexico Beekeepers Association to consider acceptance of the association’s “pollinator protection plan.”

The memorial asks NMDA to request the working group develop educational material based on the plan on best practices for farmers, land stewards, pesticide applicators, and beekeepers.

The memorial asks that the working group report its recommendations to “appropriate interim legislative committees” by October 1.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Memorials do not contain appropriations and do not carry the weight of law. However, assembling a work group and producing a report for legislative committees would require NMDA staff time and other agency resources. It is unclear if the members of the work group would be paid per diem for their service. NMDA already has extensive educational materials on pollinators and the costs of organizing a work group likely can be absorbed within existing agency resources.

From NMDA:

NMDA expects to utilize 0.25 FTE equivalency of a specialist position to meet requests outlined in HM33. NMDA expects to remain within existing fiscal resources utilizing the state's regulatory apiculturists and state's regulatory entomologist's knowledge and experience.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The memorial notes New Mexico is home to 2,000 pollinator species, including 300 types of butterflies and 1,400 types of bees. However, habitat loss, pesticide use, disease, invasive species, drought, and climate change are depleting their populations. It states the state's agriculture industry relies on both managed and feral populations of bees and other pollinators.

Pollinator Protection Plan. NMDA reports almost 40 states have adopted or are in the process of adopting pollinator protection or conservation plans, nonbinding documents that provide state agencies with direction on evaluating, monitoring, and improving pollinator population health. The agency says HM33 is expected to be followed up with a subsequent memorial that will request legislative approval of the document as New Mexico's pollinator protection plan. From NMDA:

Survey results and observations by experienced beekeepers have identified inadequate varroa mite management (parasitic mite of bees), and other deficient beekeeping husbandry practices as contributors to reductions in bee health in the state. It is expected that development of regionalized educational material will contribute to improvements in honeybee health.

The New Mexico Beekeepers Association's pollinator protection plan, which calls, broadly, for controls on pesticides, support for the beekeeper industry and a robust native pollinator population, and continued compliance with pesticide label requirements and New Mexico rules to protect pollinators. More specifically, the plan recommends:

- A halt the use of neonicotinoid products—a widely used insecticide ingredient that is highly toxic to bees and banned in the European Union—by backyard farmers and other unlicensed applicators;
- The voluntary use of systems that encourage beekeepers and insecticide users to communicate on hive placement and special practices to protect them; and
- Institutional support for the beekeeper industry and beekeeper best practices.

Existing Resources. NMDA, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and other private organizations are actively involved in pollinator protection and promotion. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, a research and education organization active in New Mexico, is

focused on protecting pollinators and endangered species, conserving endangered insect species, reducing pesticide use, and educating the public. A search for “pollinators” on the New Mexico State University website returns more than 1,400 results, including articles on what plants will attract pollinators to backyards and a “pocket guide” to native bees of New Mexico. In addition, the university has agriculture, insect, and bee specialists.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

NMDA reports the work requested by the memorial would help the agency develop pollinator protection strategies through data collecting and outreach to improve honeybee and other pollinator’s health in New Mexico. The memorial would also help the department collaborate with the beekeepers association and other state agencies to locate noncommercial hives—apiaries—and track potential threats to apiary health.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMDA would have additional administrative responsibilities for a work group.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMDA raised concerns with the narrow scope of the membership and the mission of the workgroup as proposed in the memorial as introduced. The HAAWC amendment addresses both those concerns.

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