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F I S C A L I M P A C T R E P O R T

SPONSOR: Cisneros DATE TYPED: 03/01/01 HB _____
SHORT TITLE: Environmental Health Education SB 790
ANALYST: Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY01	FY02	FY01	FY02		
	\$ 25.0			Rec	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in The General Appropriation Act _____

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Department of Health (DOH)
Department of Environment (DOE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 790 appropriates \$25,000 to the Department of Health for public education on environmental health efforts, including multiple chemical sensitivity, indoor air quality and healthy buildings.

Significant Issues

Public health education on issues of indoor air quality, multiple chemical sensitivity, and healthy buildings are of significant concern to New Mexico's citizens. Health effects, which include respiratory distress and asthma, impact individuals, the health delivery system, and tax payers. SB 790 would provide for statewide public education through prevention materials and response to public inquiry.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

\$25.0 from the general fund is appropriated to the Department of Health (DOH) for expenditure in fiscal year 2002. The amount is recurring and any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2002 reverts to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

DOH could administer SB 790 with existing resources.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

DOH indicates that funds from the appropriation in SB 790 could be utilized for printing and distribution of existing brochures, curriculum, and research, workshops, and promotional events to raise the knowledge and awareness level of the general public. Brochures and curriculum specifically for this purpose have been developed over the past three years; however, there is presently no financial source to replicate, distribute, or utilize for the training of trainers.

Public education could have a significant impact on general health in the population because minor lifestyle changes that require minimal additional expense have already proven to provide a significant impact on health outcomes. This is particularly true for citizens suffering from asthma and respiratory distresses, cases of which have increased by more than 100% over the past two decades.

From 1999 through 2001, DOH, Office of Epidemiology received a steadily increasing number of public requests for information and technical assistance to address issues related to multiple chemical sensitivity, indoor air quality, and health of buildings and work environments. Currently, such response is not funded. SB 790 funds would enable the Department of Health to begin to build capacity to effectively address some of the environmental health concerns of New Mexicans. Funds appropriated by SB 790 could be used for responding to public inquiry, making public presentations, training health educators, and developing appropriate fact sheets and prevention education materials.

In 1998, the estimated asthma prevalence in New Mexico was 6.8 percent, or about 120,000 persons (CDC, 1998). Indoor air quality education may be one of the most effective tools in asthma prevention and in the identification and reduction of the conditions that may exacerbate a variety of chronic respiratory conditions.

DOH reports that the 1997 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS), completed by the Office of Epidemiology, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is a condition affecting about 150,000 to 200,000 adults in New Mexico. About 17% of Anglo and Hispanic and 27% of the Native American populations are impacted. MCS is evenly distributed by age group and educational level throughout the state. Another 24,000 New Mexicans reported job loss due to multiple chemical sensitivity. The implications of these findings are enormous. Over 200,000 residents recognize chemicals as a source of their illness; however, studies do not take into account how many other citizens are significantly affected who are not aware of these specific symptoms or their causes. The BRFS also does not account for how many citizens are significantly affected by organic pollution such as mold, dust, pest residue, animal dander and feces of any origin.

WD/sb:trs