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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Jennings DATE TYPED: 2/17/03 HB _____

SHORT TITLE: Quantitative Forage Monitoring & Assessment SB 566

ANALYST: L. Baca

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$250.0			Recurring	GF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: HB 95, Enhance Pecos River Basin
HB 124, Phreatophyte Eradication and Control
HB 128, Goats for Phreatophyte Removal

Relates to Appropriation for New Mexico State University in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

Commission on Higher Education (CHE)
 New Mexico State University, College of Agriculture & Home Economics (NMSU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 566 appropriates \$250.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure by the Range Improvement Task Force (RITF) to establish a monitoring team of impartial resource management experts to conduct quantitative forage monitoring and assessments on public lands. The bill limits expenditures for administrative fees to 5% of the appropriation.

Significant Issues

This request was not included in the list of priority projects submitted by NMSU to the CHE for review.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2004 shall revert to the general fund. This appropriation enhances the general fund appropriation for NMSU's Agricultural Experiment Station, according to NMSU.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The term "administrative fees" is not defined in the bill. Agreement on or a definition of what constitutes administrative could forestall controversy over administrative charges in the future.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSU reports that forage has been steadily diminishing in New Mexico over the last century. This condition has been worsened by continued use and prolonged drought conditions. This bill is a response to requests from ranchers, industry representatives and community leaders for enhanced range management assistance.

AMENDMENTS

The CHE suggests adding the following language for all new recurring higher education programs (assuming that funding will continue beyond 2003-2004):

"A plan for a program evaluation, including specific program goals and criteria for assessing program effectiveness, shall be submitted to the Legislative Finance Committee and the Commission on Higher Education by October 1, 2004. An assessment of the program will be completed prior to June 30, 2005, and submitted to the Legislative Finance Committee and the Commission on Higher Education."

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. What constitutes administrative fees?
2. Isn't the Agricultural Extension Service already providing this type of assistance?
3. How will this appropriation enhance the activities already being carried out by the Agricultural Extension service?

LRB/prr