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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Moore DATE TYPED 1/24/04 HB 43

SHORT TITLE Cooperative Mosquito Abatement Program SB _____

ANALYST Aguilar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$180.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

Response Not Received From

Department of Environment (ED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 43 appropriates \$180 thousand from the general fund to the Department of Game and Fish for expenditure in fiscal year 2006 for the purpose of enhancing the research, collection, propagation and distribution of indigenous mosquito eating-fish in an abatement and control program.

An unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2006 shall revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

The Department of Game and Fish notes with the recent proliferation of West Nile Virus in New Mexico, mosquito abatement and control are especially important. This bill will provide funding for a traditionally unfunded program.

One historical means of mosquito control has been the introduction of small-bodied fishes that feed on aquatic mosquito larvae. This has been done almost exclusively using western mosquito fish, native to the South Canadian and Pecos River drainages. The Department of Game and Fish reports the spread of western mosquito fish to habitats outside of their native range has resulted in competition and/or hybridization with a variety of native fishes which is an undesirable consequence. Opportunities may exist however to utilize other species of indigenous fishes for mosquito abatement within their native ranges, and to reduce or eliminate the threats to native fishes. One possible alternative is the Gila topminnow, a fish native to the Gila River drainage that has been shown to feed voraciously on mosquito larvae.

DGF notes that it is crucial to ensure inappropriate fish species are not introduced into waters harboring protected or game fish. Current statute prohibits the stocking of fish in public waters without prior written permission of DGF.

DGF notes that no facilities currently exist to propagate mosquito eating fish if species currently bred in state are unable to meet the intent of the statute. Lacking this capability the department may have to purchase these fish from private breeders.

The appropriation contained in HB-43 will allow the department to:

1. Conduct an assessment of the efficacy of utilizing specific indigenous fishes, appropriate to each area of the state, to enhance mosquito abatement and control.
2. Identify potential sources of these indigenous fishes.
3. Contribute to existing propagation efforts.
4. Conduct an assessment of the feasibility and cost of developing or enhancing facilities for propagation of indigenous fishes, and
5. Develop appropriate permitting or authorizations for individual landowners and managers to maintain indigenous, mosquito-eating fish on their properties.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

DGF has a performance measure regarding the number of species listed as threatened or endangered under the New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act that are monitored, studied, and involved in the recovery plan process. Appropriations contained in this bill could be utilized to develop watershed-specific native fishes to be used in mosquito abatement and perhaps address threats to certain state-listed fish.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$180 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2006 shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Some human resource support will be needed to administer the program. Existing staff can absorb the time needed.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

DGF notes that the Office of Epidemiology within the Department of Health may be a more natural partner for a vector control program rather than the Department of Environment.

PA/lg