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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Begaye DATE TYPED 2/23/05 HB 702

SHORT TITLE Radiation Exposure Victim Case management SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Weber

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$100.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department Indian Affairs (DIA)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 702 appropriates \$100 thousand from the general fund to the Indian Affairs Department for the purpose of providing case management services to victims of radiation exposure or their surviving families so they may access benefits due through the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA).

#### Significant Issues

The need for compensation resulting from the affects of uranium mining operations in north-western New Mexico has long been establish with the enactment of RECA. Since RECA's enactment and subsequent amendments, however, the needs of the large number of eligible recipients remain unmet. Only 558 of 6,000 potentially eligible Navajo claimants have received some type of compensation in the past fourteen years. And, only 3,755 of these claimants are successfully registered. Approximately 5,000 claims are not currently filed. A large reason for these high numbers of unprocessed claims, is the lack of adequate staff to process the Navajo claims. Currently, there are only three caseworkers that process the more than 4,000 Navajo claims that have been submitted to their office.

The Navajo Nation Shiprock Uranium Workers Program receives \$42,500 of New Mexico appropriated funds through the Indian Affairs Department to assist Navajo claimants with the filing of their claims. This funding is used to pay for a full-time caseworker/interpreter position

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The appropriation of \$100.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

**MW/yr**