

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Campos DATE TYPED 2/17/05 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Game and Fish Department Salary Adjustments SB 631

ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

APPROPRIATION

| Appropriation Contained | | Estimated Additional Impact | | Recurring or Non-Rec | Fund Affected |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|------|----------------------|----------------------|
| FY05 | FY06 | FY05 | FY06 | | |
| | \$975.0 | | | Recurring | Game Protection Fund |

Relates to Appropriation for the Department of Game and Fish in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

No response from the Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

SB 631 appropriates \$975 thousand from the Game Protection Fund (GPF) to the DGF for expenditure in FY06 for salary increases effective the first full pay period after December 31, 2005.

Significant Issues

The LFC reports DGF has a substantial number of vacancies among conservation officers, yet agency's expansion request includes eight additional officers. The LFC urges the DGF to focus on the recruitment of officers to achieve full staffing. DGF and the State Personnel Office conducted an internal review of issues regarding conservation officer's salaries. As a result of the study, DGF developed a compensation plan that provided salary adjustments for conservation officers that took into account employee risk, training, and experience. The cost of implementing this plan is estimated at \$80 thousand per year from the GPF. The plan was approved by the State Game Commission and put into effect in FY 04.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The LFC reports for FY05-06 the GFD expenditures continue to outpace revenues annually by approximately \$1 million. To deal with revenue shortfalls, the GFD reports it will request legislation increasing hunting and fishing fees during the 2005 session.

The LFC FY05-06 recommendation includes the expansion of two conservation officers in the sport hunting and fishing program, two farm and ranch workers at the Santa Rosa hatchery, and a farm and ranch worker to conduct maintenance statewide. Though supportive of GFD's responsibilities, the committee does not support the remainder of the expansion request due to the high number of vacancies in the department. The committee recognizes the contribution made to New Mexico and recommends a special 2% compensation increase for conservations officers in addition to the increase appropriated for all state employees.

The appropriation of \$975 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense from the GPF. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the GPF.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

According to SB 631, salary adjustments will be based upon a proficiency and capability pay plan adopted by the DGF, in conjunction with the State Personnel Office.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The GPF is generated from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, special hunt fees, income from property owned by DGF, and interest on balances in the fund. One dollar of each hunting and fishing license fee is reserved for capital projects approved by the State Game Commission. Other revenues are received from the purchase of a habitat stamp required to hunt and fish on federal property, the annual auction of one permit to hunt Rocky Mountain or desert bighorn sheep, federal funds from federal excise taxes, and depredation fees assessed with each license to capitalize the big game depredation fund. General fund appropriations, while small, have augmented GPF revenue in carrying out the Conservation Services Division's responsibilities for public education and the conservation of non-game wildlife species.

AHO/lg