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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/16/07

SPONSOR Lovejoy LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Navajo Nation Water Conservation Projects SB 1046

ANALYST Weber

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$80.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

Public Education Department (PED)

Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 1046 appropriates \$80,000 from the general fund to the Indian Affairs Department for the purpose of funding an agreement with a New Mexico not-for-profit corporation for a youth conservation corps program to engage in watershed restoration projects in the Navajo Nation.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$80 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2008 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

IAD reports the bill funds watershed restoration in the Rio Puerco basin. A summer Youth Conservation Corps program would enlist local high school students, probably from the eight

Navajo Nation chapters within the basin's boundaries. The funds would primarily be allocated to provide pay for the program participants. It is estimated that 60-70 students could participate throughout the summer. This level of manpower has the potential to provide significant labor that would meaningfully benefit restoration efforts. Additionally, the summer season is optimal for executing watershed restoration projects.

The bill indicates that the program would be administered via a not-for-profit corporation. The likely entity to fill that role is the Rio Puerco Alliance ("the Alliance"). The Alliance is an Internal Revenue Service classified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization devoted to the restoration of the Rio Puerco watershed via outreach, education, and collaborative action. It was formed by members of the Rio Puerco Management Committee, a coalition that undertakes restoration projects within the Rio Puerco watershed. Its participants include 9 federal agencies, 5 tribes, 13 state agencies, 6 non-profit organizations and interest groups, and numerous residents, landowners, and interested citizens.

PED offers much of the same information but includes information regarding the value service learning provides students. Service learning provides students the opportunity to apply classroom learning with real life situations. Classroom learning becomes relevant as students apply the knowledge they have gained to solving community problems. Studies in at least three states have linked participation in service learning to gains on student achievement tests. In California, students in more than half of the schools with high-quality service learning programs showed a moderate to strong gain on achievement tests in language arts and/or reading (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane and Rovner, 1998). A study in Indiana found that service learning students had higher test scores on state assessments in grades 3 and 8 in English and mathematics (Civic Literacy Project, 2000). In Michigan, students who participated in service learning scored higher on state tests in mathematics and reading for comprehension.

MW/csd