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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/28/08

SPONSOR Rawson LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NMSU Public Broadcasting Operations SB 103

ANALYST Escudero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$180.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico State University – Public Broadcasting
Operation (NMSU)
Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 103 would appropriate \$180,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU) for Improvement of the Universities Public Broadcasting Operations.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$180.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of 2009 shall revert to the general fund.

A request was submitted by NMSU in the amount of \$561,900 to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review. SB103 appropriates \$180,000. The Departments funding recommendation for FY09 is a continuance of FY08 recurring funding in the amount of \$1,266,700 with no additional funding at this time.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to NMSU, the funding will assist the organization to fulfill the mission of the providing educational and informational programs to meet the needs of our New Mexico coverage area that is approximately the same size as the state of Maine. As the only available over-the-air stations covering this significant portion of the state we will be able to continue to provide service that will help meet the special needs of these residents with programs concerning education, culture, news, public affairs and early childhood shows. Just as important, the appropriation will support the effort of providing the professional staff, and professional environment for the development of students enrolled at New Mexico State University, continuing a thirty-year legacy.

Public broadcasting at NMSU plays a significant role in Southern New Mexico with programming tailored to the local community as well as featuring issues of national importance. The federally mandated conversion to digital operation plays a significant role as well, in that it will enhance and expand the service provided. The request helps ensure that we will meet the needs of our staff, the students of NMSU, an educational offering to the region, and the general audiences served. It can not be overly stressed that these funds will also help to meet the future federal requirements.

According to HED, New Mexico State Universities Public Broadcasting Operations offers educational, cultural, news, public affairs and early childhood programming to a significant New Mexico coverage area. This is the only available over the air station covering this significant portion of the state. In addition, the operations support professional development of the staff and students of NMSU.

Funding is intended to assist the organization to fulfill the mission of providing educational and informational programming to New Mexico which included enhancing and expanding the programming currently offered by the station.

There has been a recent federal mandate to convert all broadcasting operations to a high-definition television (HDTV) which is a [digital television broadcasting](#) system with greater [resolution](#) than traditional television systems. The department has acquired much of the necessary equipment to convert the station however there is a lack of trained staff to operate the facility. Funding is needed to recruit personnel with the technical expertise and experience needed to meet the challenge of this digital broadcasting conversion.

The ability to recruit and retain highly skilled technical staff is crucial to remaining competitive in the broadcasting industry and remaining competitive is an important measure of success.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

As stated by NMSU, failure to meet this funding request will adversely affect the ability to meet the need of a very complex broadcast system.

Failure to meet this funding request will have an adverse impact on the ability to retain and recruit personnel with the technical expertise and experience needed to meet the challenges anticipated with the conversion to the federally mandated, and state supported conversion to digital broadcasting scheduled for February 2009.

Failure to meet this funding request will have a negative impact on the level and continuity of service provided by University Public Broadcasting at NMSU, to the region it serves.

Failure to meet this funding request may impact the ability to provide service needs with regard to state and federal emergency management requirements.

PME/mt