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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/29/08

SPONSOR Pinto LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Navajo Emergency Management Services SB 370

ANALYST Weber

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$600.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)
Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 370 appropriates \$600 thousand from the general fund to the Indian Affairs Department to provide funding for emergency management services for the Navajo Nation.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$600 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY09 shall revert to the general fund.

There is currently a recurring appropriation of \$300 thousand to the Indian Affairs Department for this purpose. Any increase would raise the total above the current \$300 thousand level.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Indian Affairs Department relates the following commentary on the Navajo Nation and emergency management issues.

SB 370 would continue to fund operations for the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management (“Department”). The State of New Mexico has provided funding to the Department since 1996, with contributions made by the Navajo Nation. New Mexico has entered into Joint Powers Agreements, through IAD, with the Navajo Nation to fund the Department’s offices in Crownpoint and Shiprock, New Mexico. These two offices serve fifty Navajo Chapters located on the New Mexico portion of the Navajo reservation. In addition, the Department oversees portions of Navajo lands adjacent to the counties of Cibola, Sandoval, Rio Arriba, Bernalillo, and Socorro.

The Navajo Nation is one of the largest tribes in the US with approximately 180,000 members.¹ Its reservation lands encompass nearly 27,000 square miles.² The New Mexico portion of the Navajo Nation has a population of 69,524, according to the 2000 Census.³ The Department “plans, coordinates, responds, supports, educates, monitors and evaluates” the emergency needs of New Mexico Navajo citizens in order to save lives and property.⁴

The Department provides emergency assistance to the elderly, high risk individuals, indigent families living remote areas without transportation, and low/no income individuals.⁵ These services include the provision of necessities like fuel, firewood, coal, home weatherization, hay and grain. Victims who have lost their homes to fire receive assistance in the form of food, clothing, shelter, utility and comfort kits consisting of blankets/sheets, towels, hygiene products and kitchen utensils.

Additionally, the Department provides public education to mitigate or eliminate the risks associated with potential hazards to the Navajo Nation. Due to its location, geological features and critical facilities, the Navajo Nation is vulnerable to the damaging affects of natural, technological, and national security hazards.⁶ Hazards can range in scope and intensity, “from small local emergencies with minimal damage to multi-county disasters with extensive devastation and loss of life.”⁷ An analysis based on a 2003 Homeland Security (HLM) Hazard Assessment identified major hazards which threaten local and regional Navajo communities including:

- Natural Hazards: wildfires, drought, floods, flash floods, severe winter storms, tornados, lightning, hailstorms, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, volcanic activity, disease outbreak, crop and livestock infestation
- Technological or Human Caused Hazards: hazardous material accidents or release, power failure, urban fire, transport incident (air/rail), radiological and dam failure

¹ 2000 US Census. “Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ--NM—UT: Total Population”, 2000. Retrieved 1/24/08, www.census.gov.

² The Navajo Nation, History. Official Webpage. Retrieved 1/24/08, <http://www.navajo.org/history.htm>.

³ 2000 US Census Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000
Geographic area: Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ--NM--UT (NM part).
http://ww1.edd.state.nm.us/images/uploads/native_american/navajo.pdf

⁴ The Navajo Nation. “Navajo Nation Emergency Management Scope of Work, FY 2007.” Indian Affairs Department, Oct. 11, 2006, 1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management. “Navajo Nation Emergency Basic Plan: Draft.” October. 2004, 4.

⁷ Ibid.

- National Security Hazards: civil disorder, international and domestic terrorism, chemical/biological, conflict, and attack.⁸

The Navajo Nation believes the potential for such hazards requires the existence of a comprehensive mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery program like that provided by the Department.⁹

In 2004, the Department developed an Emergency Management Plan to address the duties, responsibilities, tasks, and relationships between the Navajo Nation and Federal, State, Counties, and local chapter governments in order to respond to emergencies and disasters. The Department also established a localized emergency management system called the Authorized Local Emergency Management Repose Team (“ALERT”) to respond to local emergencies quickly and effectively.¹⁰

The Department of Health continues with respect to health emergencies.

The Department of Health has been consulting and collaborating with the 22 tribes to conduct health emergency preparedness activities and has provided small amounts of federal funds to support these activities. During 2005 and 2006, the Department established memoranda of agreement with the tribes to plan for a response to pandemic influenza. This year, the tribes have been addressing gaps identified in a preparedness assessment. Clearly, it is imperative that the tribes work with the State and county emergency managers in the counties where their populations reside to ensure a well coordinated response to emergencies.

Because tribes are sovereign nations, it is important to establish mutual aid agreements and develop unified response plans to ensure the health and safety of tribal members. In order to assure that these preparedness activities take place with all 22 tribes, it is important that dedicated resources are available to establish an emergency management function in each tribe.

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⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The Navajo Nation. “Navajo Nation Emergency Management Scope of Work, FY 2007.” Indian Affairs Department, Oct. 11, 2006, 2.