

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 487

50th Legislature, 1st Session, 2011

Tracking Number: .185163.1

Short Title: Santa Fe Community Farms Support Approp

Sponsor(s): Senator Nancy Rodriguez

Analyst: James Ball

Date: March 11, 2011

Bill Summary:

SB 487 makes an appropriation to the Higher Education Department (HED) to operate a program at Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) to support community farms in Santa Fe County that teach farming skills and donate produce to low-income persons.

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund for expenditure in FY 12 and subsequent fiscal years. Unexpended or unencumbered funds do not revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

According to the analysis of SB 487 by HED, this request was not submitted by SFCC to the department for review. HED's funding request for higher education recommends a 3.0 percent reduction for all existing appropriations for FY 12.

Substantive Issues:

According to HED, SB 487 would create a new program not previously funded at SFCC. HED states that SFCC would utilize the appropriated funds as seed money to apply for federal grants such as those made available through the US Department of Agriculture, in order to develop and establish a sustainable agriculture program.

SFCC envisions establishing a one-year certificate program as well as an associate of applied science degree program. SFCC would likely partner with the Santa Fe Community Farm (SFCF), a nonprofit organization and one of the oldest existing farms in Santa Fe, which was established 60 years ago.

Background:

HED reports that SFCF serves as an agricultural education center that offers opportunities to develop hands-on skills and capabilities in sustainable agriculture practices and natural resource conservation to a wide variety of community groups of all ages and abilities. The farm fosters a deeper understanding of the role of agriculture for food security and community. Volunteers come from a wide variety of groups including schools (elementary through graduate school),

elderhostels, inter-faith groups, the shelters, private citizens, and individuals fulfilling court-ordered community service.

HED adds that SFCF has been and continues to be a regarded model of small-scale urban food production, farmland preservation, agricultural education, and charitable giving. Applying appurtenant water rights to 11 agricultural acres, the farm produces diverse fruits and vegetables, which are donated to local charities for distribution to the hungry, homeless, and disabled of Santa Fe.

Related Bills:

None as of March 11, 2011.