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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Johnson ORIGINAL DATE 3/4/15
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 554
SHORT TITLE San Juan Coal Units and Health Screenings SB _____
ANALYST A. Sánchez

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

| Appropriation | | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------------|------------------|
| FY15 | FY16 | | |
| | \$1,000.0 | Recurring | General Fund |

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 554 proposes to appropriate \$1 million from the general fund to the DOH for health screening services to persons whose health was negatively impacted by the San Juan (coal-fired) generating station. Unexpended balances at the end of FY16 shall not revert to the general fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The \$1 million appropriation contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended balances remaining at the end of 2016 shall not revert to the general fund.

DOH states that the appropriation in HB 554 is not in the executive budget recommendation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DOH provides the following regarding implementation of HB 554:

A significant barrier to implementing the provisions of HB 554 is that no known health

screening protocols have been established to determine whether or not individuals, such as workers or community members, have been negatively affected by coal-fired power plants. These protocols would need to be based on extensive research typically conducted by federal agencies and academic centers. This research would then need to be translated into evidence-based health screening protocols that clearly result in health benefits to persons who are screened. Such protocol development is again typically led by federal agencies and academic experts, in conjunction with environmental health professional and medical organizations. These complex activities are beyond the purview of state health departments.

Coal-fired power plants are among the largest sources of pollution in the United States (http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/locations.php?id=155). They are the largest industrial emitters of mercury and arsenic into the air. They emit 84 of the 187 hazardous air pollutants identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as posing a threat to human health and the environment. Coal-fired power plants also emit cadmium, chromium, dioxins, formaldehyde, furans, lead, nickel, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. They emit volatile organic compounds, including benzene, toluene, and xylene. Emissions include acid gases such as hydrogen chloride and hydrogen fluoride. Small amounts of radioactive materials such as radium, thorium, and uranium are also emitted. Furthermore, burning coal in power plants emits sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides react with precipitation in the atmosphere to form acid rain. Burning coal also produces particulate matter.

Hazardous air pollutants emitted by coal-fired power plants can cause a wide range of health effects, including heart and lung diseases, such as asthma. Exposure to these pollutants can damage the brain, eyes, skin, and breathing passages. It can affect the kidneys, lungs, and nervous and respiratory systems. Exposure can also affect learning, memory, and behavior

(http://noharm.org/lib/downloads/climate/Coal_Literature_Review_2.pdf;

<http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/121/21/2331>). Furthermore, arsenic, benzene, cadmium, chromium compounds, TCDD dioxin, formaldehyde, and nickel compounds are listed as carcinogens in the [Thirteenth Report on Carcinogens](#) published by the National Toxicology Program.

Mercury pollutes lakes, streams, and rivers, and accumulates in fish. Nearly all fish and shellfish contain mercury. Exposure to mercury is a particular concern for women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children (https://nmtracking.org/en/environ_exposure/contaminants/mercury/;

https://nmtracking.org/en/environ_exposure/fish/;

<http://www.fda.gov/food/foodborneillnesscontaminants/metals/ucm351781.htm>;

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/Metals/ucm393070.htm>).

People who live near coal-fired power plants have the greatest health risks from power plant pollution (http://noharm.org/lib/downloads/climate/Coal_Literature_Review_2.pdf; <http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/121/21/2331>). However, in addition to the San Juan Generating Station, another coal-fired power plant potentially affecting the health of local communities is the Four Corners Power Plant, located approximately 8-10 miles away. Thus, it may be difficult or impossible to differentiate the source of any potential negative impacts on health.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HB 554 relates to the DOH's 2014-2016 Strategic Plan, Result 1: Improved health outcomes for the people of New Mexico.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

DOH states that it would require additional resources to carry out the mandate of HB 554 if it were enacted.

ABS/aml