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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Gonzales ORIGINAL DATE 2/25/15
LAST UPDATED _____ HM _____

SHORT TITLE Importance of Conservation of Farmland SM 96

ANALYST Peterson

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY15	FY16		
NFI	NFI	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicate of House Memorial 88

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)

Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

Economic Development Department (EDD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 96 recognizes the importance of conservation of irrigated farmland, including small parcels, to New Mexico's rich cultural heritage and economy. The memorial calls for copies to be distributed to: the NMDA Secretary; the Secretary of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resource Department; the Office of the State Engineer; the chair of the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC); the Acequia Commission; and the board chair of the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal impact.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

NMDA notes agriculture plays a vital role in New Mexico's economy such as:

- New Mexico's agriculture economy exceeded \$4 billion dollars according to the department's agricultural statistics publication from 2012. The report shows New Mexico has approximately 13 thousand farms with more than half between one and nine acres in size.
- A considerable number of small family farms are located along the nearly one thousand acequias or community ditches throughout the state. Acequias are essential to the important role in responding to the demand for supplies of fresh, local ,and healthy food.
- The ever growing demand for locally grown, high value, high nutrition food is showcased through New Mexico's approximately 75 or so farmers' markets. Small-scale growers have less land and rely on high-value specialty crops that can bring in more dollars per acre than other traditional crops. New Mexico State University (NMSU) reports that more young people are joining the state's agricultural community and more kinds of agricultural items are being produced in New Mexico.

NMDA further points out that each state agency named in the bill has a role in promoting and protecting agriculture. NMDA supports many programs for farmers and producers of agricultural products which include financial and marketing support. NMDA supports acequias and community ditches through its acequia and community ditch fund. NMDA convened a conference, Agrifuture, of young aspiring farmers in 2014, and the organic farming conference in New Mexico is one of the most well attended conferences in the state with well over 700 people coming to learn and share experiences connected to organic food production.

EMNDRD oversees the Natural Lands Protection Act (Section 75-5-4 NMSA 1978) which an advisory committee to the secretary of EMNRD to recommend lands for conservation.

ISC provides funding for acequia and community ditches to make a variety of irrigation improvements.

NMDA notes the water trust board (WTB) makes funding expressly available for acequia projects through funding that was donated by a private party.

SEP/aml/je