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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Pinto ORIGINAL DATE 2/8/16  
LAST UPDATED 2/11/16 HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Code Talker Museum and Veteran Center SB 273/aSICAC

ANALYST Chilton

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY16	FY17		
	\$175.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

#### Responses Not Received From

Tourism Department (TD)

Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Senate Indian and Cultural Affairs Committee Amendment

The bill was amended to specify that the location of the Code Talker Museum and Visitor Center would be Tse Bonito, New Mexico, a small town near the Arizona border, northwest of Gallup in McKinley County, N.M.

#### Synopsis of Bill

SB 273, Code Talker Museum and Veteran Center. Appropriates \$175,000 from the General Fund+ to the Indian Affairs Department for the purpose of studying the feasibility and marketability of a national Navajo code talkers museum and veterans' center within McKinley County.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$175 thousand contained in this bill is a non-recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2017) shall revert to the General Fund.

IAD states that “The Indian affairs department is specifically named as the state agency to receive the funding and is tasked with conducting the study. This study will require substantial time for Indian affairs department staff to administer. Of note, the services of the Chief Procurement Officer, the Chief Financial Officer and an Accountant/Auditor will be required to develop and process pay requests for the feasibility and market study and conduct oversight of the study in addition to implementing audits. The amount of the appropriation will require increased staff time associated with administering the funds and conducting the requested study.”

If the proposed museum and veterans’ center were found to be feasible, a subsequent appropriation or other mechanism of funding its construction and staffing would have to be sought.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Navajo Code Talkers were a group of men recruited and trained during World War II to use a modified code version of the Navajo language to pass radio messages from one part of the Pacific Theater of that war to another part, primarily for the Marine Corps. Navajo men were recruited for the effort in February 1942, about two months after the Pearl Harbor attack. Their contributions to the war effort in the Pacific were thought to be extremely important and have been much celebrated. (<http://navajopeople.org/navajo-code-talker.htm>) The last of the Navajo code talkers, Chester Nez, died in 2014; it is important to the Navajo people, and especially to the descendants of the Code Talker, that their memory is maintained.

The center is intended to be built near Tse Bonito, NM, and would feature “an immersive learning environment, featuring interactive exhibits and activities, living demonstrations of the Navajo code and culture. Displays on World War II military history, and classrooms for educational seminars,” while the veterans’ center would act as a community center and gathering place for veterans for all wars.

At the present time, a very small Navajo Code Talkers Museum is housed in the Gallup Chamber of Commerce. In addition, Gallup has a Veterans Hall of the American Legion and a branch clinic of the Veterans Administration, the latter open five days each week.

LAC/al/jo