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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Pinto ORIGINAL DATE 03/08/17
LAST UPDATED 03/13/17 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Federal Radiation Exposure Compensation SM 85/aSRC

ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SRC Amendment

The Senate Rules Committee amendment appears to make some technical corrections that do not change the intention of the memorial which is to support improvements to the federal RECA.

Synopsis of Memorial

Senate Memorial 85 (SM 85) requests that the New Mexico congressional delegation support expanded compensation under the federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA).

The memorial provides the following background: from 1945 to 1962, the US conducted nuclear weapons testing and large uranium deposits have been found on or near the Navajo Nation; to compensate workers for radiation exposure, in 1990 the U.S. Congress passed RECA but only designated certain areas of Arizona and Utah as official downwind areas for which compensation would be paid; and limited compensation to those workers employed before January 1, 1972.

The memorial also provides that in 2013, U.S. Rep Ben Lujan introduced HR 1645, and in 2015, U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich signed onto SB 331, to extend compensation to uranium workers exposure from 1972 to 1990; expanded the list of eligible workers and medical conditions and made all qualifying claims eligible for \$150,000 of compensation; and would have added to the list downwind areas in New Mexico, in addition to other downwind states.

Finally, the memorial provides that on January 24, 2017, U.S. SB 197, a bill to amend RECA to improve compensation was introduced and Senators Udall and Heinrich co-sponsored the bill.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The memorial has no fiscal impact.

RECA was designed as an expedient, low-cost alternative to litigation, to compensate individuals who contracted certain cancers and other serious diseases following their exposure to radiation as a result of covered activities. Compensation is also available to survivors of affected individuals.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The New Mexico congressional delegation is being requested to continue support for federal legislation to improve compensation under RECA.

In 1990, Congress passed RECA to compensate uranium miners, millers and ore transporters \$100,000 who developed certain diseases following their employment. To be eligible for compensation, the worker must have developed one of these diseases: lung cancer, fibrosis of the lung, pulmonary fibrosis, cor pulmonale related to fibrosis of the lung, silicosis, pneumoconiosis, and for millers and ore transporters, renal cancer or chronic renal disease.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

If passed, the memorial will be transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation.

AHO/sb/jle