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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Pinto/Allison **ORIGINAL DATE** 02/03/21
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE Tribal Natural Resources Specialist **SB** 172
ANALYST Bachechi

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY21	FY22		
	\$50.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Indian Affairs (DIA)
 Environment Department (NMED)
 New Mexico State Land Office (SLO)
 Office of the Natural Resources Trustee (ONRT)
 Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 172 appropriates \$50 thousand from the general fund to the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) to hire a tribal natural resources specialist, who will work with the Indian nations, tribes, and pueblos of the state to cultivate and develop their natural resources. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2022 shall revert to the general fund.

There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$50 thousand contained in this bill is an expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY22 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

A tribal natural resources specialist could assist tribes with strategic planning to conserve and develop their natural resources and related economic development efforts. IAD does not currently have a dedicated staff member with expertise in the cultivation and development of natural resources. IAD highlights that tribal natural resources development is integral to the state's climate change work, land conversation, and economic development efforts and stresses that it is vital the state determine how best to engage its tribal nations to combat climate change and promote economic development in rural areas near tribal lands.

The Environment Department added that the proposed \$50 thousand appropriation could be insufficient to hire an individual with any experience or education in a natural resource science discipline.

The State Land Office is currently in the process of establishing a formal tribal consultation policy and continues to expand its collaboration with tribes and pueblos on review of cultural properties and other projects of mutual concern. A tribal natural resources specialist could be an important partner to the State Land Office's natural resources and conservation staff; a relationship that would likely yield benefits for the State Land Office's management of state trust lands.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Although IAD does not foresee this bill resulting in significant additional operating expenses, the bill will require IAD staff time and resources to recruit, hire or contract with, and oversee the work of the tribal natural resources specialist.

ALTERNATIVES

In California, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service provides tribes assistance in many areas, including conservation planning, rangeland management and improvement practices, irrigation water development structures and management, brush control, erosion control structures, agriculture, forestry, farmland protection, wildlife habitat improvement, and wetlands restoration. The service's goal is to work directly with the state's tribal nations to protect and improve their natural resources, such as soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

CLB/sb