F I S C A L I M P A C T R E P O R T

SPONSOR Woods **ORIGINAL DATE** 1/21/2022 **LAST UPDATED** 1/24/2022 **HB**

SHORT TITLE AG Experiment Station Science Centers **SB** 53

ANALYST Fischer

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY22	**FY23**		
	$10,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
New Mexico State University

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 53 appropriates $10 million from the general fund to New Mexico State University for the operation and maintenance of its 12 agricultural experiment station science centers. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2023 shall revert to the general fund. There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed that the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of $10 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2023 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

New Mexico State University's (NMSU) Agricultural Experiment Station is the principal research unit of the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences. All research faculty in the college have appointments with the Agricultural Experiment Station.

The Agricultural Experiment Station budget covers 95 faculty and 269 staff and student employees on NMSU's campus and at the 12 agricultural science centers:

- Leyendecker Plant Science Center (Las Cruces);
- Fabian Garcia Research Center (Las Cruces);
- Chihuahuan Desert Rangeland Research Center (Las Cruces);
- Agricultural Science Center at Farmington;
- John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center at Mora;
- Clayton Livestock Research Center;
- Agricultural Science Center at Tucumcari;
- Agricultural Science Center at Clovis;
- Sustainable Agriculture Science Center at Alcalde;
- Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas;
- Corona Range and Livestock Research Center; and,
- Agricultural Science Center at Artesia.

NMSU reports an $87 million backlog of deferred maintenance at the stations. In FY20, the university received a $3 million in general obligation bond capital outlay to support the agricultural science center, and as of October 2021, none of the $3 million had been spent.

The Agricultural Experiment Station's FY22 budget is $37.1 million, of which $14.8 million (41 percent) is from the state general fund. Other sources of revenue are from federal appropriations, grants, and contracts. The LFC and executive's FY23 budget recommendations for the Agricultural Experiment Station are both $15.1 million, a $250 thousand increase, to support the Station's network of weather stations, which are important for forecasting and determining eligibility for federal disaster assistance.

A 2018 LFC program evaluation noted that New Mexico had an outsized number of agricultural experiment stations compared to the number of farms and size of the state's agricultural economy. The report also noted seven of the 12 stations supported the work of fewer than 10 faculty. The LFC evaluation recommends the university consider options to consolidate the number of science centers it operates.

MF/acv