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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 1st Session, 2023

Bill Number	<u>SB86/aSIRC</u>	Sponsor	<u>Hemphill</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.223185.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SIRC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>NMSU Rural & Tribal Development Institute</u>		
Analyst	<u>Andrews</u>	Original Date	<u>1/23/2023</u>
		Last Updated	<u>2/28/2023</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of SIRC Amendment

The Senate Indian, Rural and Cultural Affairs Committee amendment to SB86 (SB86/aSIRC) changes language to define rural community as a population of fifteen thousand or less. The amendment also adds language to define a tribal community as a tribe or pueblo located wholly or partially in New Mexico.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 86 (SB86) creates the Rural and Tribal Development Institute within New Mexico State University (NMSU). The Rural and Tribal Development Institute would focus on issues unique to rural (defined as populations less than 30 thousand) and tribal communities. The Rural Tribal Development Institute would provide an annual report to the Governor and appropriate interim legislative committees on the activities of the Institute and an index of the vitality of rural and tribal communities in New Mexico.

FISCAL IMPACT

SB86/aSIRC appropriates \$2.8 million from the general fund to the board of regents of NMSU for expenditure in FY24 through FY27 to staff and operate the Rural and Tribal Development Institute. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY27 shall revert to the general fund.

The New Mexico Economic Development Department notes the potential fiscal implications of this bill to economies of rural and tribal communities and to the state will be beneficial, leading to managed, innovative and economy-growing development in presently underserved areas of the state.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Specific Rural and Tribal Development Institute activities outlined in SB86/aSIRC include: (1) identify baseline conditions needed for community growth, (2) survey communities inside and outside of New Mexico to identify and determine the effectiveness and suitability of rural economic development strategies within New Mexico, (3) develop and assist rural and tribal communities in developing strategies for community development, (4) provide training for students and existing community leaders engaged or interested in rural and tribal development, and (5) serve as a community resource, providing information and analysis for state agencies and rural and tribal communities. It appears the purpose of the Rural and Tribal Development Institute aligns with NMSU's [mission](#) to serve the diverse needs of the state through comprehensive programs of education, research, extension and outreach, and public service.

NMSU notes that while some issues are similar across the rural-urban continuum, many are unique to or more pronounced in rural communities. [Research](#) by the Pew Research Center in 2018 shows some national differences in issues within rural and urban communities. Issues that rural community members identified more frequently, i.e., a higher percentage of the community indicating the issue was a problem, included:

- Job availability;
- Access to public transportation;
- Access to medical services;
- Access to high-speed internet; and
- Access to grocery stores.

The issues identified at a national level have been identified as a New Mexico issue as well. In a recent NMSU Extension publication, Patrick and Blayney (2022) note that 20 rural counties experienced population loss between 2010 and 2018. Additionally, they indicated that New Mexico's rural areas lagged behind urban areas in employment, earnings, poverty, education, and housing. The authors conclude, "The challenge for New Mexico's rural policymakers, local officials, and residents is to develop strategies to provide the infrastructure, services, and workforce needed to foster business growth and job creation."

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Economic Development Department (EDD)
- Indian Affairs Department (IAD)
- New Mexico State University (NMSU)

MCA/cf/mb/cf