

LFC Requester:

Scott Sanchez

## AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2025 REGULAR SESSION

### SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

*{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

**Date Prepared:** March 5, 2025

*Check all that apply:*

**Bill Number:** SB353

Original  Correction   
Amendment  Substitute

**Sponsor:** Sen. Jeff Steinborn & Sen. Shannon Pinto

**Agency Name and Code Number:** 305 – New Mexico Department of Justice

**Person Writing**

**Short Title:** Search and Rescue Emergency Responses

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### SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

#### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate expenditure decreases)

#### REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate revenue decreases)

#### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>						

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:  
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

**SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

*This analysis is neither a formal Opinion nor an Advisory Letter issued by the New Mexico Department of Justice. This is a staff analysis in response to a committee or legislator’s request. The analysis does not represent any official policy or legal position of the NM Department of Justice.*

**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis: Amends Section 24-15A NMSA 1978 to include more information about search and rescue emergencies. Also outlines the role of a “Search and Rescue Officer” (“SAR”) and how they will interact with first responders in other jurisdictions (including providing support and notification).

Section 1: Adds the term “SAR emergency” to the existing definitions section and defines it as “an incident requiring urgent SAR assistance.” The substitution adds the definition for the term “tribe” or “tribal.”

Section 2: Adds new material concerning “SAR Emergency Response Protocol Standardized Search and Rescue Criteria.” This protocol details that the SAR resource office will consult with local, state and federal responders and provided training to personnel who engage in emergency response. It also lays out that there will be a memorandum of agreement between the SAR and the local agency and outlines that process. The substitution adds an additional subsection, outlining the consultation process and the creation of SAR protocols, as well as specifies the notification process.

Section 3: Adds new material regarding SAR response protocols as they concern “Notification of Agencies with Relevant Emergency Response Jurisdiction.” This includes informing the entity that requested assistance as well as other “appropriate jurisdictions” including “federal land management agencies.” SAR has the decision to not provide the requested services, and if they do, they must inform the requester of such a decision. The substitution also details the requirements of the state SAR control agency in notifying affected authorities.

Section 4: States the amendment will be effective of January 1, 2026.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: N/A**

Note: major assumptions underlying fiscal impact should be documented.

Note: if additional operating budget impact is estimated, assumptions and calculations should be reported in this section.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:**

Section 2(C) does not explicitly mention tribal entities or indigenous nations. Instead, it references “local and state emergency response entities and public service answering points.” Given the inclusion of tribal entities earlier in the bill, it might be helpful to reference them here as well. Consider amending to include tribal entities, including the option of memorandums of agreement with tribal entities. Additionally, the term “public service answering points” is not defined and it is unclear what the term means.

Section 3 details the requirements of the state SAR control agency in notifying “affected authorities.” The bill states that the SAR must notify the affected authorities that have jurisdiction where the “emergency is anticipated to be located.” The “anticipation” language is a bit confusing as the emergency is likely already occurring (it is beyond anticipation).

**PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS N/A**

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS: N/A**

**CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP: N/A**

**TECHNICAL ISSUES: N/A**

**OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES: N/A**

**ALTERNATIVES: N/A**

**WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL: Status quo**

**AMENDMENTS: See above comments.**