

LFC Requester:**Scott Sanchez****AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 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:** 02/05/2026

Check all that apply:

Bill Number: HB 315Original Correction Amendment Substitute **Sponsor:** Matthew McQuenn**Agency Name****and Code**

New Mexico Livestock Board

Number:50800**Short****Person Writing****Analysis:**Belinda Garland**Title:** Livestock Code Changes & Horses**Phone:** 505-304-2315**Email** Belinda.garland@nmlb.nm.gov**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT****APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
0	0		

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		
\$0	\$0	\$0		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	0	\$15,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$25,000.00	Nonrecurring	General
Total	0	0	\$3,200	\$3,200	Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: Requiring the New Mexico Livestock Board to approve the qualifications of a free-roaming horse expert; allowing the New Mexico Livestock Board to make rules regarding the approval of the qualifications of a free-roaming horse expert.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There would be fiscal implications to implement this bill. The NMLB would need to acquire a study on what qualifications would be required to license a Free Roaming Horse Expert. That study would cost approximately \$10,000. The time involved in rulemaking would be considerable. Also, the travel time for staff meetings, committee meetings, and board meetings are estimated to be \$10,000. The costs to have the Records Division enact the rules would be between \$250 and \$1,000. In addition, an estimated \$5,000 will be needed to create a database of licensed horse experts. These costs would be one-time, non-recurring.

Expected recurring costs will be for maintenance of the database, estimated to be \$1,000/yr. Plus, depending on the enacted rules there could be a recurring cost (40 hours/yr x \$55/hour = \$2,200) in the 200 category for annual review of licensing applicants.

Revenue generated for the NMLB is expected to be zero. Unless the agency chooses to charge for application reviews, then revenue is estimated to be very minimal.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This bill addresses the need for experts in range management and horse handling/care to deal with the issue of the over population of unmanaged horses on public and private lands in New Mexico.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The performance of the Free Roaming Horse Expert will need to be monitored by the agency who enters into a contract with the Expert.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Administrative time and effort will be considerable to begin a licensing process and then to continue to manage and update that licensing record and re-certification.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None

TECHNICAL ISSUES

This bill strikes the problematic issues of the current law regarding DNA collection of a horse that does not have a comparative catalog for analysis. That aspect alone makes this bill worth enacting into law.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSA 77-18-5, as written, causes more problems than solutions. As many lawsuits over the last several years have been filed to find some answers to the free roaming horse issue, none have resulted in guiding the NMLB with a good resolution. This bill will essentially be ridding our statutes of the confusion and re-start the process for finding a path forward for the free-roaming horses of New Mexico. This bill does not answer the question of “where will the horses go”, but at least it is a much-needed step in the beginning analysis.

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The free roaming horses of this State will continue to reproduce and devastate the land that they need to support their existence. This bill gives some direction in which the State can begin to better manage both the horses and the land. Hopefully, this bill will enact actions which will keep the horses from their own starvation once the land is destroyed.

AMENDMENTS