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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Lundstrom DATE TYPED: 02/26/03 HB 922

SHORT TITLE: Navajo Language Preservation Pilot Project SB _____

ANALYST: Weber

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$25.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From
Office of Indian Affairs

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 922 appropriates \$25,000 from the General Fund to the Office of Indian Affairs for the purpose of a pilot project to preserve the Navajo language using Navajo elders as instructors in the Mexican Springs chapter of the Navajo Nation.

Significant Issues

The Office of Indian Affairs reports that many Native American languages are in danger of extinction. Even Navajo, spoken by more people than any other Native American language in the United States, is endangered. A Navajo Nation investigation found that less than half of the children entering kindergarten are fluent in Navajo. The 1990 USA census found 148, 530 speakers including 7,616 monolinguals out of 219,198 ethnic Navajo. The critical danger sign that a language is in trouble is when there are few or no speakers under the age of 18.

The funding for this program would be used to train and develop curricula for elders. This would benefit the children by teaching native language as well as cultural traditions.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$25. contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2004 shall revert to the General Fund.

MW/njw