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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/31/06  
 LAST UPDATED 2/12/06      HB HJM 44/aHF1#1

SPONSOR     Ruiz    

SHORT TITLE     Commitment to Healthy Communities          SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST     Lewis    

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates SJM 27.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)  
 Health Policy Commission (HPC)  
 New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of HF1#1 Amendment

House Floor Amendment 1 removes the phrase “especially groundwater” from the “whereas” paragraph noting that communities are particularly at risk from environmental degradation due to the existing and threatened contamination of scarce resources.

#### Synopsis of Original Bill

House Joint Memorial 44 requests that the Department of Health and the Department of Environment jointly review their functions, operations and work as well as the constitutional provisions, statutes, regulations and programs that the departments administer to determine, with particular emphasis on minority and low-income communities:

- A. the extent to which each department serves to promote healthy communities and meaningful public participation in environmental decision-making;
- B. the changes that would be required for each department to more effectively promote healthy communities and meaningful public participation; and
- C. the changes that would be required in each department for the two departments to work co-

operatively on issues of environmental degradation, public health and public participation in environmental decision-making.

The joint memorial further requests that:

- the Departments of Health and Environment report on their joint findings and their work to the appropriate interim legislative committee no later than August 31, 2006; and that
- copies of this memorial be transmitted to the Governor, the Secretary of Health and the Secretary of Environment.

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) states that the full extent of additional staff responsibilities and associated costs cannot be precisely evaluated.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

According to the Department of Health (DOH), New Mexico and the federal government have underscored the importance of healthy communities and the need for more meaningful public participation in environmental decision-making with New Mexico Executive Order EO-05-056 and the United States Executive Order 12898 and the creation of the national environmental justice advisory council.

Environmental degradation poses risks to public health and threatens contamination of scarce natural resources, especially ground water. These problems tend to concentrate in communities without political power and resources, especially in minority and low-income communities.

DOH suggests that this joint memorial could help develop sustainable and effective collaboration between the Departments of Health and Environment to promote healthy communities and public participation in environmental decision-making for all New Mexicans.

NMED notes that on October 17, 2005 the Secretaries of the Environment and Health Departments signed a memorandum of understanding creating a joint task force, the Precautionary Principal Task Force, to guide activities that prevent harm to the environment and harm to human health and to advise executive branch agencies and other state entities and higher education institutions about precautionary principles. The concept of precautionary action is the basis of many activities designed to protect the health and safety of citizens and focuses on opportunities to promote environmental and economic justice, including meaningful participation of communities in decisions affecting the public's health, to protect the environment and to safeguard the health of all New Mexicans. The findings and recommendations of the Precautionary Principal Task Force are to be reported on or before October 1, 2006.

With regard to environmental degradation and health, the Health Policy Commission (HPC) notes that, according to the World Health Organization, environmental conditions are a major direct and indirect determinant of human health. Over five million children per year die from illnesses and other conditions caused by the environments in which they live, learn and play. Around two million children under five die every year from acute respiratory infections, the largest killer of young children. These infections are aggravated by environmental hazards such as indoor air pollution.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

NMED notes that the joint memorial will require additional responsibilities of NMED and DOH staff, who would be diverted from their primary tasks to meet the measure's requirements.

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