

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-6-06

SPONSOR Griego LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Taos County Aquifer Mapping Project SB 569

ANALYST Hadwiger

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$75.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB570, SB323.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

New Mexico Department of Environment (NMED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 569 appropriates \$75 thousand from the general fund to the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) in FY07 to develop and implement a Taos County aquifer mapping project.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$75 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY07 would revert to the general fund.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DFA explained that SB569, with it companion bill SB570, are phases III and I, respectively of a

multi-phased project which, when completed, will create a ground water protection program that monitors existing wells in Taos County for aquifer depletion and water quality. The funding in SB569 will begin Phase III of the project—the underground mapping of the geology and hydrology of the Taos Plateau and the high mountain valleys where the majority of Taos' unincorporated communities are located. The funds will pay for the services of a hydrologist, a geologist, field technician, professional services contracts, map reproduction and digitization, and water sampling.

OSE added that aquifer mapping is always useful to improve the understanding of aquifer limits and characteristics. This is especially the case for counties such as Taos that contain complex conditions. A number of related studies have been completed, or are in the process of being completed for the area. The U.S. Geological Survey is presently conducting a geophysical survey along the mountain front in cooperation with the NM Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources (BGMR), OSE, and others. Geological mapping has also been performed by the BGMR in the area recently. These studies will help map and characterize the aquifers for portions of Taos County. This bill may be necessary to complete on-going work or to perform work in areas where mapping information is lacking.

The OSE would appreciate the opportunity to assist in the coordination of activities because the project has the potential to improve water resource administration. The OSE has recently completed a groundwater flow model for the area with others. The modelers can provide input on the existing data gaps. Addressing these gaps will improve administration and management. Other parties should also be made aware of the program for potential cooperation. The OSE can assist in this coordination.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

NMED noted that SB569 does not have significant performance implications for agency programs. However, mapping of ground water aquifers would allow for the regional assessment of the aquifers and provide additional information that NMED could use in the issue of discharge permits and abatement of ground water pollution in Taos County. Thus, SB569 could result in long-term improvements in ground water quality in Taos County.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The grant will be administered through DFA which already has the staff and the knowledge to easily fund and monitor this project.

### **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

Relates to SB570, SB323.

### **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

NMED noted that SB569 appropriates the funds to LGD/DFA for development and implementation of a ground water mapping project in Taos County. However, LGD/DFA is not a science-based organization that would have the technical expertise to develop and implement a ground water mapping project. It would be more appropriate for technical scientific experts such as geologists and hydrologists at the Bureau of Geology associated with the New Mexico Institute of

Mining and Technology (NM Tech) to develop and implement a ground water mapping project.

**AMENDMENTS**

OSE suggested that, on page 1, line 19, after the period, insert “All work funded through this appropriation shall be coordinated with the Office of the State Engineer.”

DH/yr