F I S C A L I M P A C T R E P O R T

SPONSOR Cisneros **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/6/06 **LAST UPDATED** 2/7/06 **HB**

SHORT TITLE NM Tech Aquifer Mapping **SB** 683

ANALYST Earp

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	**FY07**		
	$3,750.0	Non-Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB343, SB515, SB 565, SB569 and HB553

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
Higher Education Department (HED)
Office of State Engineer (OSE)
New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology (NMTech)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 683 appropriates $3,750,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology for the Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources to conduct a statewide aquifer mapping program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Information provided by NMTech states that the $3,750,000 appropriation is intended to support a five-year aquifer mapping project. Therefore, the appropriation is identified as a non-recurring expense to the general fund. As introduced, any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund (see Technical Issues below).

As of the date of this analysis (2/07/2006), SFCS/SB415 contains an appropriation of $300,000 for the Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources to map underground water in the state.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This proposal (at a funding level of $750,000) was included among the special program funding requests submitted by the HED for review. However, it was not included in the HED fiscal year 2007 funding recommendations to the Legislature.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMTech provides administrative support for the Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources. No significant additional impact is anticipated if this legislation is adopted.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

This bill is generally related to SB343, SB 415, SB 565, SB569 and HB553, all of which appropriate funding for aquifer mapping and studies.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

NMTech states that its proposal was for $3.75 million to cover a five-year period of mapping at $750,000 per year. As written the bill requires return of unexpended funds at the end of the first year. NMIMT states that it will be impossible for the bureau, with limited staff, to do this mapping in a single year and, therefore, the reversion date should be changed to allow carryover for a five-year period (through fiscal year 2011).

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

OSE notes that aquifer mapping provides the foundation for managing and administering the state's groundwater resources. These studies quantify groundwater supply and quality. The studies also help protect surface water sources and help planning by local and other governmental entities. Aquifer mapping has been an ongoing activity within the state for many years but additional mapping is required. The NMBGMR, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and OSE have been involved in mapping and characterizing the state's aquifers. Coordination between the agencies is required to set priorities, share information, and to encourage the pooling of resources to achieve the highest benefit. Coordination of water research is lacking within the state. The OSE has a close working relationship with the NMBGMR and the USGS and would appreciate the opportunity to bring agencies together to add support for the project.

NMTech states that the request is to provide funding for the Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources to provide aquifer mapping in conjunction with the Office the State Engineer, county and local governments over a five-year period. Aquifer mapping involves field studies of the units that carry groundwater, delineation of their geographic extent below the land surface, definition of bounding features (such as faults) that interrupt water flow, measurements of rates of water transmission and water quality and related work that helps to define and model the potential groundwater supplies of the mapped areas. The Bureau, with collaboration from the NMOSE, is fully capable of conducting such work and has completed a number of such projects in recent years. Substantial new staffing will be needed to carry out a program of this magnitude. It requires trained and experienced hydrogeologists who will have to be hired to conduct this program. That takes time and an offer of at least five years of employment to be feasible.

AMENDMENTS

The bill could be amended to allow carryover of funds through fiscal year 2011 (a five-year period).

DKE/nt