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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Carlos R. Cisneros **ORIGINAL DATE** 2-10-06
LAST UPDATED 2-14-06 **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE Implement Forest and Watershed Health Plan **SJM** 37/aSRC
ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
NFI	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)
 New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SRC Amendment

Senate Rules Committee amendment to SJM37 amends the legislation as follows:

1. On page 2, line 17, after "as" insert "the need for geospatial resources and mapping,".
2. On page 3, between lines 3 and 4, insert the following:

“WHEREAS, the office of the state engineer is statutorily charged with responsibilities regarding interstate compacts and treaty water delivery obligations and the department of environment has statutory authority with regard to surface water, ground water and drinking water regulation enforcement; and”.

3. On page 3, between lines 10 and 11, insert:

"WHEREAS, the bureau of geology and minerals resources at New Mexico institute of mining and technology conducts an aquifer mapping program for the purposes of providing the best available science for the use of water managers and local and tribal governments for promoting community collaboration in support of landscape

scale restoration that can help to maximize watershed yield; and".

4. On page 5, line 10, after the comma insert "the state engineer, the secretary of environment,".

Senate Rules Committee amendment to SJM37 attaches no appropriation to the legislation.

Synopsis of Original Senate Joint Memorial 37

Senate Joint Memorial 37 requests the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission to collaborate in the implementation of the Forest and Watershed Health Plan and the Non-Native Phreatophyte/Watershed Management Plan.

Specifically the memorial notes that:

- New Mexico is recognized as a national leader in watershed restoration and management, because it has adopted two cutting-edge statewide strategic plans, the forest and watershed health plan and the non-native phreatophyte/watershed management plan, each of which was requested by the legislature and the governor; and
- the creation of the plans was predicated on the current diminished state of New Mexico's watersheds, and because existing and projected drought conditions in New Mexico underscore the need to give an even higher priority to protecting and restoring New Mexico's watersheds, water supply and water quality; and
- recommendations from the forest and watershed health plan and the non-native phreatophyte/watershed management plan call for the agencies to implement the plans through a broadly inclusive collaborative process, recognizing that New Mexico's continued national leadership in watershed restoration is dependent upon the successful implementation of the plans through such a process; and
- the heart of the plans is to address watershed restoration at a landscape scale by empowering local communities to engage in integrated projects to improve ecosystem health in New Mexico's forests and riparian areas by addressing issues such as water supply, water quality, interstate compact and treaty water delivery obligations, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protection of wildlife habitat, public access to natural resource recreation areas, protection of drinking water supplies and increasing the economic health and well-being of both rural and urban communities through biomass-based and other emerging economic development opportunities; and
- in 2004, congress enacted Public Law 108-317, which authorized up to fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) per year to establish and fund forest and watershed restoration institutes in three states; and
- the forest and watershed restoration institute at New Mexico Highlands University was created with state-supported matching funds for the purposes of providing the

best available science for use by land managers and promoting community collaboration in support of landscape-scale restoration projects in coordination with New Mexico's universities; and

- the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and the Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute are committed to implementation and integration of the plans in ways that will promote a collaborative conservation ethic, accountability for the use of public funds, leveraging of federal funds and the application of the best available science and technology to inform projects; and
- these agencies agree that New Mexico must fully engage the state's resources to address these issues; and
- restoring New Mexico's watersheds to a healthy state will require a long-term commitment of time and resources, and this work reflects a new priority to fully coordinate all related efforts in the state without regard to jurisdiction; and
- the recommendations from the forest and watershed health plan, the non-native phreatophyte plan and the forest and watershed restoration institute's work plan call for increased and better coordination with state, federal, local and tribal programs to leverage existing financial and other resources more effectively; to identify new resources; and to facilitate public awareness of the risks unhealthy watersheds pose to New Mexico's cultures and traditions, to the environment, to the state's economic health and to the quality of life for New Mexico's residents; and
- the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and the Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute have convened an initial work group of representative stakeholders for the purpose of developing a set of recommendations to address the issues stated above.

The memorial resolves that in order to achieve success in the implementation of the forest and watershed health plan and the non-native phreatophyte/watershed management plan, each adopted in 2005, the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, be requested to continue to collaborate with the forest and watershed restoration institute and to continue to engage the work group and additional stakeholders for the purpose of developing a set of recommendations to address long-term funding and coordination among state, federal, local, private, tribal entities and state resources; and

The memorial further resolves that that the agencies report their recommendations to the appropriate interim committee by July 1, 2006; and that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources, the director of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the chair of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and the director of the Forest Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University.

There is no appropriation attached to this legislation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) notes that this legislation recognizes the importance of restoring and protecting New Mexico's forests and watersheds. To this end, EMNRD, along with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and, in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC), is directed to continue to collaborate with the Forest Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University (FWRI) to develop a set of recommendations to address long term funding and coordination among state, federal, local private and tribal entities to achieve success in the implantation of the two plans. The responsible entities are directed to engage the work group, convened by EMNRD and NMDA, and additional stakeholders in this process.

The New Mexico Forest and Water Institute indicates that it a new statewide environmental research and education coalition with a mission to foster collaboration among government agencies, academic and research institutions, land managers, and the interested public for the restoration and sustainable use of New Mexico's forest and water resources, and that this legislation correlates with the goals in New Mexico Highlands University strategic plan and performance measures.

BW/mt:yr