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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/21/08

SPONSOR Papen LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NMSU Dam Safety Center SB 27

ANALYST Cox

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$500.0	Non-Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files
 New Mexico State University (NMSU)
 Department of Higher Education (HED)

Responses Received From

New Mexico State University (NMSU)
 Department of Higher Education (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 27 requests an appropriation of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) from the general fund to the board of regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure in fiscal year 2009 to establish a dam safety center to provide research, training and professional services in flood control dam maintenance and operation. This Senate Bill refers to the Lower Rio Grande' area dams, such as Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$500,000 contained in this bill is a non-recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2009 shall revert to the general fund.

NMSU states that the proposed project will support two faculty members and five graduate students to perform an evaluation of EBID's inventory of dams and propose technical solutions to the problems they present. In partnership with EBID, the faculty and graduate students will propose funding mechanisms, including federal grants, creation of watershed districts to assess property protected by the dams, and impact fees for development. The faculty and EBID will

also prepare a detailed plan to make the Dam Safety and Inspection Center a sustainable organization, funded by research grants, training fees, and service fees for inspections.

HED states that subsequent funding for the Dam Safety Center is expected to come from the partnerships with EBID and potential partnerships established in the first year.

This request was submitted by NMSU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review, but is not included in the Department's funding executive recommendation for FY09.

The HED's evaluation table of FY09 Research and Public Service Projects provided to the LFC classifies this project as a "would not oppose if funding available" project. Reasons for this classification decision are not provided. (LFC Report 07-20, Higher Education Department Review of Selected Research and Public Service Projects, January 12, 2008, Table 4, p74.)

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

NMSU states that the requested funding will identify means and methods to comply with new federal regulations to improve dam safety. This Bill will strengthen the capabilities of the engineering faculty to improve dam safety inspections across New Mexico.

HED states that EBID owns 27 flood control dams in southern New Mexico that were built from the 1950s to the 1970s. NMSU would use the funds to partner with EBID to assess the dams' hydrological, hydraulic, and geotechnical conditions. NMSU proposes to work with state and federal agencies to share information about project experiences to other parts of the state and region through the Dam Safety and Inspection Center' ongoing research, service and training functions.

NMSU states that economic development in much of New Mexico is predicated on adequate flood protection infrastructure. Hundreds of small flood control dams in the state provide inadequate protection for high hazard assets such as residential and industrial development. During August and September of 2006, we saw the potential damage from intense rainfall and runoff events

PRC/bb