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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/24/08

SPONSOR Ulibarri LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NM Tech Ground Water Research SB 106

ANALYST Cox

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$400.00	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Higher Education (HED)

New Mexico Energy & Minerals (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 106 requests a \$400,000 appropriation from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMT) to be expended in FY09. The monies are directed to the geophysical research center to expand its atmospheric and ground water research capacities.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

A request was submitted by NMT to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review and is included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY09.

The appropriation of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) contained in this bill is a 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.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Geophysical Research Center (GRC) is a state-funded research organization, part of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology's (NMT) Research and Economic Development Division. Hydrology and geophysics faculty members in the Department of Earth and Environmental Science are each partly funded by the GRC, allowing them to devote large portions of their time to research. The GRC is also a partner in the operation of the NMT IRIS PASSCAL Instrument Center, a principal facility of the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology.

The primary mission of the GRC is to carry out research in areas related to and affected by water, placing emphasis on atmospheric, surface, underground water and air quality. The high standard and excellence of the GRC-based Hydrology Program has served as a catalyst for collaborations with universities, national labs and federal and state agencies in hydrology and the related fields of geology, chemistry, biology, and engineering. These studies are especially important to the Southwest in understanding issues related to long-term sustainability of water resources.

NM Energy and Minerals states that SB 106 could have a potential positive impact on the Oil Conservation Division's (OCD) ability to perform its duties under the Oil and Gas Act and Water Quality Act. The additional appropriation could ultimately result in additional, useful data regarding the groundwater and hydrogeology of New Mexico.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

NM Energy & Mineral notes that this appropriation relates to HB 84 and SB 2, which also provide for funding of research and analysis of water and geology in New Mexico with the potential to yield data that might be helpful to the OCD in performing its duties. SB 2 also appropriates funds specifically to New Mexico Tech; however this bill is specific to funding for the expansion of a particular geophysical research center at the facility, whereas the other two bills provide funding for other specific purposes [New Mexico aquifer mapping (SB2) and water quality and availability (HB 84)].

PRC/mt