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

	ORIGINAL DATE	02/09/11		
SPONSOR Dodge	**LAST UPDATED**	02/08/11	**HB**	341

SHORT TITLE Rabies Vaccination Requirement Exemption   **SB**

ANALYST Wilson

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	**FY12**		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY11	**FY12**	**FY13**	**3 Year Total Cost**	**Recurring or Non-Rec**	**Fund Affected**
Total		$1.0-$5.0	$1.0-$3.0	$2.0-$8.0	Recurring	General Fund*

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases) * It is not clear which agency will be responsible for the administration of this bill.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
Department of Health (DOH)
Livestock Board (NMLB)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 341 adds a new section to Chapter 77, Article 1 NMSA 1978 to provide an exemption for the requirement of rabies vaccination for animals. HB 341 will allow veterinarians to write a letter of exemption from the requirement for rabies vaccination. The letter of exemption will include a description of the animal, the medical reason that precludes vaccination against rabies, be signed by a licensed veterinarian, and indicate a time of expiration of exemption if the medical reason is temporary.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal impact

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HB 341 does not specify to where the letter of exemption should be addressed.

In New Mexico rabies is diagnosed in bats, skunks, foxes and occasionally other wildlife and domestic animals. New Mexico, as a state, has repeated diagnosis of rabies in livestock as well as pet animals. New Mexico has serious rabies concerns with the bordering states of Arizona, Texas and Mexico. Several cooperative programs expending millions of dollars are currently underway to prevent incursion of rabies from these areas into New Mexico. Many species of animals in New Mexico are vaccinated for rabies including, exotic pets, equine, livestock and zoo animals.

The NMLB notes that this bill could result in a large number of exemption requests which will ultimately weaken New Mexico's very effective rabies control program. This in turn will result in higher exposure for humans. Currently there are no known contradictions for rabies vaccine. Rabies vaccine is considered worldwide to be among the safest and most effective vaccines.

The NMLV states passage of this bill will create a weakness in the existing safe and effective rabies program in New Mexico. Passage of this bill will result in conflicts with existing county and municipal regulations currently in effect.

DOH provided the following:

> An area of low rabies vaccine coverage in dogs and cats could potentially be created as a result of overuse or misuse of rabies vaccine exemption letters which could decrease protection from wild animal rabies.

> The rabies vaccination program not only saves animal lives but also protects children and families from a potentially fatal disease. It is also the reason the number of human rabies cases contracted from pets is so low.

> Currently, only twelve states allow exemptions from the rabies vaccination requirements. Those states that have exemptions, typically only allow them if the veterinarian certifies that the life of the animal is threatened by vaccination. Many veterinarians who have been practicing for decades say that rabies vaccine is one of the safest vaccines they give, even in animals with underlying medical conditions.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

It is not known which agency will be responsible for handling the provisions of this bill.

DW/mew