

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number: HJM 6**

**50th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2012**

**Tracking Number: .187780.2**

**Short Title: NMSU Unmanned Flight Center Designation**

**Sponsor(s): Representative Roberto “Bobby” J. Gonzales and Others**

**Analyst: Travis Dulany**

**Date: January 26, 2012**

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**Bill Summary:**

Along with stating support for the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Statewide Coalition, HJM 6 requests the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to designate:

- New Mexico an “unmanned-aircraft-systems-friendly state”; and
- New Mexico State University’s (NMSU) Physical Science Laboratory’s (PSL) Unmanned Aircraft Systems Flight Test Center a Center of Excellence.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Legislative memorials do not contain an appropriation.

**Background:**

Through NMSU and PSL, the Technical Analysis and Applications Center (TAAC) was established in 1999 in an attempt to provide safe integration of UAS with the National Airspace System. According to NMSU, “In order for a UAS to be flown in the USA outside military airspace, a certificate of authorization or experimental airworthiness certificate must be issued by the FAA.” NMSU has obtained a certificate of authorization to operate the “Aerostar” and “Orbiter” systems, and the TAAC conducts flight operations within restricted airspace in southern New Mexico.

In 2003, the university established the Operations and Validations Program, a dedicated program for operational and performance evaluation of UAS. Additionally, the UAS Test and Evaluation Center was formed to promote regional UAS capabilities, and consists of PSL, the 46<sup>th</sup> Test Group at Holloman Air Force Base, and White Sands Missile Range. Though NMSU has partnered with the US Air Force and Army, the university aims to also find civilian applications for the UAS.

**Related Bills:**

None as of January 21, 2012.