LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS

Bill Number: SB 180 **51st Legislature, 2nd Session, 2014**

Tracking Number: .195178.2

Short Title: Santa Fe CC Smart & Micro Grid Program

Sponsor(s): Senator Peter Wirth

Analyst: James Ball **Date: February 2, 2014**

Bill Summary:

SB 180 makes an appropriation for the Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) Training Center Corporation (TCC) to design and develop:

- a smart grid workforce training program;
- a micro grid innovation laboratory;
- research park; and
- testing center.

Fiscal Impact:

$250,000 appropriated from the General Fund to the Higher Education Department (HED) for expenditure in FY 15. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Substantive Issues:

According to SFCC, the Santa Fe Microgrid Systems Laboratory (MSL) is a new initiative, with a mission to accelerate the commercial deployment of micro grid systems worldwide. Microgrids are smaller versions of the main power grid that operate at a community scale. They can either be grid-tethered or independent. MSL's scope includes deployments in the developing world, to help alleviate energy poverty for an estimated 2.4 billion people. In the industrial world retrofitting the existing grid can improve performance to meet economic, security, and environmental goals. Within New Mexico, the existing grid is in need of modernization in order to increase security, resilience, and operating efficiencies to be responsive to community needs. Tribal communities especially seek this improved service and energy sovereignty.

Background:

According to HED, smart grids are new-generation electrical power networks that efficiently control and balance the supply and demand of power through digital information that integrates small and large-scale renewable energy sources.

SFCC states that, like the traditional bulk power grid, smart micro grids generate, distribute, and regulate the flow of electricity to consumers, but do so locally. Smart micro grids are an ideal way to integrate renewable resources at the community level and allow for customer

participation in the electricity enterprise. Consumers can connect and disconnect from the main grid as desired. Many experts believe micro grids are the future of the electric power system due to their many advantages.

Committee Referrals:

SCC/SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

None as of 2/2/2014.