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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Woods/Roch ORIGINAL DATE 01/19/18
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Study Northeastern NM Water Resources SB 55

ANALYST Amacher

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY18	FY19	FY20		
	\$350.0	\$350.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

Environment Department (NMED)

New Mexico State University (NMSU)

Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 55 appropriates \$350 thousand dollars from the general fund to the board of regents of New Mexico state university for expenditure in FY19 and FY20 for the department of animal and range sciences to study the quantity and quality of ground water resources in Colfax, Harding, Mora and Union counties, with a focus on Colfax and Harding counties, for the purpose of determining appropriate land use in rural agriculture areas of those counties.

Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall revert to the general fund. If enacted, the effective date of this bill is May 16, 2018.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$350 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund for FY19 and FY20. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall revert to the general fund. The scope of study is not clearly defined and therefore it is difficult to determine if the amount requested is appropriate or even duplicative of

existing efforts by other state agencies.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB55 appropriates \$350 thousand dollars from the general fund to the board of regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure in FY19 and FY20 for the department of animal and range sciences to study the quantity and quality of ground water resources in Colfax, Harding, Mora and Union counties, with a focus on Colfax and Harding counties, for the purpose of determining appropriate land use in rural agriculture areas of those counties.

The scope of the study is not clearly defined thereby making it difficult to ensure efforts and costs are not duplicated by existing work performed by the Office of the State Engineer, the Environment Department, and other departments within NMSU focused on groundwater research in the field and in adapting water and land management best practices.

NMSU reports the aim of this legislation is to develop accurate groundwater resource data sets for northeastern New Mexico. The data sets will focus on determining fluctuations in the quantity and quality of groundwater resources. NMSU notes this work reflects a proactive effort by these communities and agricultural producers to lead the way in adapting agricultural land management practices and community mindsets to understand and properly utilize groundwater resources.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSU indicates there is very little recharge entering the groundwater system from preliminary data from Union and Mora counties. If recharge throughout this region is limited, the long-term sustainability of agricultural operations dependent on groundwater is compromised. Understanding the fluctuations in quantity and quality of groundwater can assist the businesses and communities in making informed decisions in directing the geography of appropriate development.

As indicated by NMSU, work supported by this legislation will enhance research and outreach efforts recently funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to take place in 2018-2021 in Cimarron County, OK, Las Animas, CO, and Union County, NM.

The OSE makes a point that there is more than one aquifer in Colfax, Harding, Mora and Union counties that are not necessarily well connected which could be problematic in a single large-scale study.

The OSE, working with Balleau Groundwater, Inc., completed a new groundwater model covering the Clayton area in 2014. The New Mexico Bureau of Geology published a study of Hydrology of east-central Union County in 2013. The US Geological Survey performs ongoing groundwater level monitoring in this part of the state. The OSE requests, if this legislation is enacted, involvement in the approval of the scope of work for the tasks undertaken as part of this project to avoid potential duplication of efforts.

JMA/sb