

subsequent fiscal years shall not revert to the general fund.

The General Appropriation Act of 2018 included a \$200 thousand recurring and \$225 thousand nonrecurring appropriation to PED for New Mexico-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. With this proposal, the total recurring and nonrecurring appropriation for the program would be \$775 thousand. Excess funds would not revert.

The executive FY20 budget recommendation includes a \$400 thousand recurring appropriation to fund New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables. The LFC recommendation continues the \$200 thousand recurring appropriation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Agriculture Department questions the need for an emergency clause, noting most produce is harvested between May and October, greatly reducing supplies, and therefore the need for reimbursements, for the remainder of school year. Further, the department reports more than \$61 thousand in appropriations passed through the department to Albuquerque schools in FY18, when PED funds were limited.

The Legislature did not appropriate funds to the program for FY18 because of budget constraints but authorized the use of about \$29 thousand left from FY17. Between FY15 and FY17, the program received appropriations averaging about \$285 thousand. However, LESC reports the department did not spend the full appropriations during those years, leaving from \$152 thousand to \$30 thousand untouched.

PED reports the number of school districts and charter schools seeking reimbursements has grown steadily; 56 districts and charter schools received funding in FY19, compared with 22 in FY15, and 25 districts intend to create farm-to-school partnerships for the first time. PED reports FY19 demand for funding, allocated on a competitive basis, exceeded funds available by \$125 thousand.

LESC reports it is hard to measure the impact of the program because the money is distributed to school districts and they do not report on the results. However, PED indicates school districts report an increase in the share of funds used to buy locally grown agricultural products and more than a third use the state grant to draw federal funds.

The Department of Health says emerging national studies show farm-to-school programs minimize childhood obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases. Further, students in schools with edible gardens on hands-on food activities are more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables.

DUPLICATION, RELATIONSHIP

Duplicates SB115.

Senate Bill 83 proposes the appropriation of \$30 thousand for a pilot program to purchase New Mexico-grown produce from farmers' markets and roadside stands for senior center meals.

Similar legislation from previous sessions, House Bill 208 in 2017 and House Bill 62 in 2018,

failed to pass.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The Agriculture Department suggests producers consider “season extension methods” (e.g., greenhouses, hoop houses, cold storage) to extend the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Health Department cites reports studies show an interrelationship between health and academic achievement, with students participating in lunch and breakfast programs improving grades, test scores, and school attendance, and that the improvement was greater when fruits, vegetable and dairy products were added to the diet. DOH says research also shows that those who eat generous amounts of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet have reduced risk of stroke, heart disease, diabetes, certain types of cancer, and other chronic disease. However, DOH says, only 20 percent of New Mexico high school students get the recommended level of fruits and vegetables, and 28 percent of kindergarteners and 34 percent of three graders in New Mexico are obese.

The amount and type of fresh produce available in New Mexico varies by county. Rural counties have a disproportionate number of farms per school when compared with urban areas, while apples are widely available in northern New Mexico but lettuce is easier to obtain in southern New Mexico. As reported by the federal Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, San Miguel County has 877 active farms but only 19 public schools (a ratio of approximately 46:1). Bernalillo County has 1,007 active farms and 197 public schools (a ratio of 5:1).

ALTERNATIVES

The amount in the General Appropriation Act could be increased.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

PED could run out of reimbursement money before the end of FY19.

HFG/sb/gb