

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill has a provision that protection of additional species by commission rule or policy is contingent on sufficient resources, therefore DGF does not expect any fiscal impact at this time.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The NMAG reported that SB 417 does several things. First, it updates the policy language for the State Game Commission, which was last updated in 1953. It would be the policy of the state to provide for the management and protection of wildlife “as a resource for the benefit, use and enjoyment of all New Mexicans, including future generations, and to provide for wildlife propagation, protection, regulation and conservation.”

Second, SB 417 repeals Section 17-2-2, “Game to be Protected,” and replaces it with “Wildlife to be Protected”, conferring on the state game commission the “authority to protect all species of wildlife, including protected species, furbearers and non-game species by rule or policy”, and the discretion to *not* protect species that are not specifically named in statute. Finally, it makes clear that the Game Commission is not obligated to respond to or mitigate property damages caused by wildlife unless otherwise required to do so by law.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The bill may require additional wildlife law enforcement officers if required to protect all species of wildlife, including non-game animals.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

May conflict with SB 203, which proposes to change the name “Department of Game and Fish” to “Wildlife Department,” and “Game Commission” to “Wildlife Commission.”

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

EMNRD noted that SB 417 recognizes that species beyond “game” species should be managed and protected, and that wildlife is important for a functioning ecosystem and has other values beside public recreation and as a food supply.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Protection of species will continue to be those currently in statute.

AHO/gb