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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/26/21

SPONSOR Woods LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Expansion of Network Weather Stations SB 104

ANALYST Valenzuela

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY21	FY22		
	\$3,500.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
 University of New Mexico (UNM)
 Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 104 appropriates \$3.5 million from the general fund to the climatologist at New Mexico State University to the office of state climatologist to expand the weather station network throughout the state, including the purchase and installation of hardware for new stations and administrative and operational support.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$3.5 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY22 shall not revert to the general fund.

NMSU did not submit this request to the NMHED for possible incorporation into the NMHED higher education comprehensive funding recommendation. The NMHED has a formal process for reviewing earmarked budget requests for higher education institutions when developing the NMHED funding recommendation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the NMSU website for the State Climatologist, the current ZiaMet mesoscale weather monitoring network (Mesonet) operated and maintained by NMSU consists of 10 agricultural weather stations and 16 climate monitoring systems. Also shown are extensive partnerships with federal government entities and volunteer organizations. The weather stations are sited at the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) throughout the state.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department reports SB104 will upgrade the ZiaMet Mesonet from 26 to 138 stations in total. The 138 stations will be comprised of 111 new stations, 11 upgraded agriculture stations, and 16 upgraded climate stations. Aside from the funding in SB104, an additional \$758,618 will be needed to maintain the ZiaMet Mesonet per year for operations including equipment maintenance, calibration and replacement, project planning, travel, data analysis, and reporting.

MFV/sb/al