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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/04/13

SPONSOR Sanchez, M. LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Rio Grande Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring SB 295

ANALYST Roberts

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY13	FY14		
	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Environment Department (NMED)
 Department of Agriculture (NMDA)
 Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 295 appropriates \$150 thousand dollars from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District to support existing Bosque ecosystem monitoring program efforts on the Rio Grande, including river and Bosque water and natural resource monitoring.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$150 thousand dollars contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2014 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The NMDA reports that the Department acts as the fiscal agent for the 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and provides ongoing program support to them. Pass-through funds such as these, which are allocated to the SWCDs through NMSU, are monitored and

subject to state procurement code and generally accepted accounting practices. In addition, SWCDs are independent political subdivisions of the state and subject to audits in accordance with state audit rules.

The mission of the Bosque ecosystem monitoring program (BEMP) is collaborative long-term ecological monitoring of key abiotic and biotic processes and characteristics to promote continued education, understanding, and stewardship of the riparian ecosystem to scientists, teachers, students, policy makers, and the public. The BEMP has been monitoring the Bosque since 1996 and the emphasis for the funding is to continue monitoring the Bosque through outreach and education for students. The BEMP funding has ranged from grants to funds for program support and other funding from entities such as Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, PNM, Sandoval county, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of Interior, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The NMED adds:

Extensive monitoring of the Rio Grande Bosque already occurs through a number of programs – most notably the Middle Rio Grande Engendered Species Collaborative Program which is focused on the health of the Silvery Minnow, and the BEMP which is focused on the ecosystem of the middle Rio Grande. The Surface Water Quality Bureau conducts water quality monitoring of the Rio Grande.

The BEMP is a joint effort coordinated by University of New Mexico's (UNM) Long Term Ecological Research network and Bosque School for citizen and student group monitoring of the Middle Rio Grande and riparian ecosystem, including 27 sites along the Rio Grande. Start-up funding was provided through the National Science Foundation; data is incorporated into UNM-sponsored Bosque research efforts and shared with other researchers, and land and natural resource managers.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

This bill includes a provision that the monitoring program should include the participation of at least 3,000, kindergarten through college-age New Mexico students that support common core standards. The bill also states that the program shall provide technical data, and reports and analysis to New Mexico natural resource and research agencies on the impacts of drought, climate and other ecological drivers on the health of the Rio Grande and its Bosque.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of New Mexico State University would be responsible for administering the funds to the department of agriculture for the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District to support existing Bosque ecosystem monitoring program efforts on the Rio Grande, including river and Bosque water and natural resource monitoring.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Are there particular efforts required to be completed by the Valencia SWCD that are not performed under currently funded BEMP and other state agencies?