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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Small ORIGINAL DATE 3/6/17
 LAST UPDATED _____ HM 94

SHORT TITLE Study Elk License Distribution & Increase SB _____

ANALYST Armstrong

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		None			Nonrecurring	DGF operating budget

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Response Received From

Department of Game & Fish (DGF)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Memorial

House Memorial 94 (HM94) requests that the State Game Commission (SGC) address the issue of elk hunting license distribution in New Mexico and consider increasing the number and percentage of licenses issued to New Mexico residents through the Elk Private Land Use System (E-PLUS).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with this memorial would be absorbed by DGF's operating budget. According to DGF analysis:

If the tenants of the memorial were to be adopted by the SGC, the department would recognize a reduction in revenue from the sale of E-PLUS licenses. This is because the department receives higher license fees from non-residents (mature bull / either-sex = \$557; antlerless = \$347) than residents (mature bull / either-sex = \$99; antlerless = \$69) when landowner authorizations are converted into licenses. Because of the complexities of the E-PLUS system and what the potential final distribution of licenses would be, it is difficult to accurately determine the exact revenue loss.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Through E-PLUS, DGF distributes private land elk authorization certificates which can be used by hunters to buy private-land elk licenses.

DGF provided the following:

The department manages elk throughout the state by identifying management units as being located inside the Core Occupied Elk Range (COER) or outside the COER. Licenses are issued to public hunters (lottery draw) and private landowners (authorizations) within the COER areas and private land authorizations are issued to landowners that have property outside the COER areas. The department adheres to the prescribed quota (84 percent) for public land hunters per statute. The memorial is addressing the percentage of all authorizations that are issued to private landowners inside and outside COER areas.

The memorial is requesting that the department, through SGC, change how private landowner authorizations are distributed and utilized by hunters. Specifically, the memorial indicates that New Mexico resident hunters should receive a greater percentage of private landowner authorizations to be converted to elk licenses annually.

While the department acknowledges that non-residents are the largest consumer of private landowner authorizations, the department developed E-PLUS in recognition of the important benefits that private lands make to elk populations and hunting opportunities. The current E-PLUS system was developed with years of stakeholder input and the program has been adjusted multiple times throughout its more than 40 year existence. The department issues private land authorizations based on elk population objectives and leaves the distribution of those authorizations for use on their private property to their own discretion.

JA/jle