F I S C A L I M P A C T R E P O R T

SPONSOR Campos **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/4/19 **LAST UPDATED** **HB**

SHORT TITLE Ground Water Resources Study **SB** 255

ANALYST Hawker

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation					Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23		
	$350.0				Nonecurring	General Fund

Parenthesis ( ) indicate expenditure decreases

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
New Mexico Livestock Bureau (NMLB)
New Mexico State University (NMSU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 255 appropriates $350 thousand from the general fund to NMSU for expenditure in FY20 and FY21 for the department of animal and range sciences to study the quantity and quality of ground water resources in Colfax, Harding, Mora and Union counties to determine appropriate land use in rural agriculture areas of these counties.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of $350 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund.

Higher education institutions in New Mexico do not revert unexpended funding back to the state's general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB255 funds the development and maintenance of groundwater data sets for Union, Colfax, Harding and Mora counties. The data sets will focus on determining fluctuations in the quantity and quality of groundwater resources throughout the region. They will build upon ongoing collaborative work between NMSU's Animal and Range Science Department and geologists working in the four county area. This work is related to conservation-oriented agricultural practices that use linked data sets that include rangeland health, animal health, watershed health, and groundwater resources.

Preliminary data from Union and Mora counties suggest there is very little groundwater recharge entering the groundwater system. If recharge throughout the region is limited, there could be long-term impacts on the sustainability of groundwater dependent agricultural operations.

Groundwater recharge is the process where water moves downward from surface water to groundwater. Recharge is the primary method through which water enters an aquifer.

Data on fluctuations in the quantity and quality of groundwater can assist agricultural businesses and rural communities make informed decisions. Additionally the data will provide information required for private landowners to work with federal agencies, such as USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement conservation practices that promote resilient production systems.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSU Animal and Range Science Department has received a $1.2 million grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to support agricultural producers and land managers make proactive groundwater management decisions that promote social, economic, and environmental resilience. This funded research will be conducted in Union County, New Mexico and outside of New Mexico in Cimarron County, Oklahoma and Las Animas, Colorado. The grant period is 2018-2021.

NMSU states SB255 will complement this federally funded research, expanding the work in Union County and adding Colfax, Harding, and Mora.

VKH/al/sb