

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (www.nmlegis.gov). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/29/2020
 SPONSOR Sanchez LAST UPDATED 2/16/2020 HM 9/aHF1#1
 SHORT TITLE Renewable Energy Investment Strategic Plan SB _____
 ANALYST Iglesias

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

FY20	FY21	FY22	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Moderate	Moderate		Moderate	Nonrecurring	SIC, SLO, and EDD Operating Budgets

Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases

Companion to HB 99

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

State Investment Council (SIC) on companion bill HB99
 State Land Office (SLO)

No Response Received From

Economic Development Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HF1 #1 Amendment

House Floor #1 Amendment adds geothermal and biomass to the types of renewable energy projects occurring in New Mexico. The amendment adds the Economic Development Department (EDD) to the agencies requested to research and draft the strategic plan. The amendment notes that identifying fund managers and investment funds capable of managing and investment in New Mexico’s renewable energy projects may include a request for information soliciting responses from investment funds capable of managing those investment vehicles.

Additionally, the amendment adds that the strategic plan pursue investment opportunities with returns at or above market rates. For economically targeted investments, the amendment resolves the strategic plan pursue investments that maximize benefit to taxpayers, including investment opportunities with returns at or above market rates. Lastly, the amendment requires copies of the memorial also be sent to EDD and the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resource Department.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Memorial 9 requests that the State Investment Office develop a strategic plan, with the consultation of the State Land Office, for state investment in New Mexico’s renewable energy, storage and transmission projects. The State Investment Office recommendations would be reported to the State Investment Council (SIC) and appropriate interim legislative committees by 2021.

This memorial notes the desirability of:

- quantifying the impact of renewable investments to supplement oil and gas investments;
- identifying those investments’ vehicles;
- identifying state funding sources;
- strategies for financing;
- focusing on renewable projects on tribal and state lands;
- identifying potential partners to develop renewable projects and investments;
- identifying quantifiable metrics for measuring increases resulting from the investments;
- and
- other relevant information.

New Mexico renewable energy projects include energy generated from wind, solar and other renewable sources and storage and transmission resources that are predominantly used to store or transmit renewable energy generated with New Mexico or New Mexico-based renewable energy equipment manufacturing facilities.

Copies of the memorial shall be transmitted to the SIC, State Investment Officer, Commissioner of Public Lands, Secretary of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Environment.

There is no effective date of this memorial. It is assumed that the effective date is 90 days after this session ends.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The companion bill to this memorial, House Bill 99, appropriates \$50 thousand to the State Investment Council to research and draft the strategic plan.

According to SIC staff, the potential fiscal impact beyond the appropriation is highly speculative, but there are reasons to believe the impact could be significant. SIC staff provide the following discussion regarding the fiscal implications of this memorial’s companion appropriation:

“As the alternative energy market grows, having the guidance of an expert review may assist the council in making investments in New Mexico that are most likely to take advantage of this positive trend.

Further, in the past the SIC’s investments in New Mexico’s alternative energy industry, because of their highly speculative nature, have been made primarily through differential rate investment authorized only for the Severance Tax Permanent Fund (STPF, valued at \$5.6 billion as of December 31, 2019). With recent changes in the alternative energy industry, it is possible that investments in New Mexico’s alternative energy may reasonably be expected

to produce market rate returns suitable for investments from the Land Grant Permanent Fund (LGPF). In this regard, Larry Fink, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BlackRock, one of the world's largest asset managers, wrote in his most recent annual CEO letter:

As a fiduciary, our responsibility is to help clients navigate this transition [to alternative energy]. Our investment conviction is that sustainability- and climate-integrated portfolios can provide better risk-adjusted returns to investors. And with the impact of sustainability on investment returns increasing, we believe that sustainable investing is the strongest foundation for client portfolios going forward.

The Annual CEO Letter is available at <https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/investor-relations/larry-fink-ceo-letter>). Accordingly, there is at least the possibility that a consultant may conclude that market rate investments can be made in New Mexico's alternative energy industry. If this conclusion were reached, the SIC could prudently make more such investments using a portion of the much larger LGPF (valued at \$19.7 billion as of December 31, 2019)."

The State Land Office (SLO) state this bill has no direct fiscal impact to SLO; however, agency resources would be allocated to assist with the strategic plan. SLO indicates that to the extent this plan leads to renewable energy projects occurring on state trust lands, there would be a positive but undetermined impact with respect to SLO revenue generation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The following discussion was provided by SIC staff regarding the companion appropriation in HB99:

"At this point, the SIC is unaware of any specific firm that is doing this sort of analysis, so it is difficult to say with certainty whether \$50,000 would be sufficient to produce the type of report and plan that would be most useful. Based upon experience with similar types of work, however, it appears that \$50,000 would be sufficient to at least obtain a high-level plan with further details to be developed over time. Further, the expertise of the Investment Office is in investing, not in economic development. So, while making strategic investments can play an important role, an investment strategy alone cannot be expected to provide a comprehensive plan for growing New Mexico's alternative energy businesses."

The State Land Office provides the following discussion regarding this memorial:

"The State Land office supports efforts to foster the development of renewable energy projects. Renewable energy projects are important in generating the State's clean energy needs, but also provide the State Land Office with an important revenue stream to the extent they occur on state trust lands.

Creation of a State Investment Council strategy for renewable energy development will provide New Mexico additional tools to make sound decisions in stewarding our clean energy resources. Recognizing and leveraging New Mexico's superior position with respect to renewable energy potential, Commissioner Garcia Richard established the State Land Office's first ever Office of Renewable Energy, which is a distinct division focusing on

expediting solar and wind projects on state trust lands.

This new office presently manages 15 active long-term leases for renewable energy projects; nine of which are for wind farms, while six leases are for solar power facilities. There are 46 applications currently being processed to lease state trust land for the development of wind and solar power facilities.

These and other renewable energy projects could benefit from targeted and focused investment.

The creation of such a strategic investment plan could also encourage the creation of specific uniform and consistent criteria for eligibility for state investment in renewable energy before 2021.”

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

According to the State Land Office, there would be a modest impact on SLO’s renewable energy office in collaborating with the SIC on the strategic plan.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 99 appropriates \$50 thousand to the SIC in FY20 and FY21 to “research and draft a strategic plan to establish a New Mexico renewable energy investment policy.” This expenditure would appear calculated to carry out the intent of this memorial.

ALTERNATIVES

SIC staff note the SIC is self-funded by the assets they manage (e.g. the land grant permanent fund and severance tax permanent fund), and typically does not receive general fund dollars. The SIC could fund such a study at the direction of the legislature, assuming the 11-member council does not object.

DI/rl