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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR HAWC ORIGINAL DATE 02/09/21
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 48/HAWCS
SHORT TITLE Statewide Weather Stations SB _____
ANALYST Valenzuela

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

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

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates SB104

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

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

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

The House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee Substitute for House Bill 48 appropriates \$3.5 million from the general fund to the climatologist at New Mexico State University including \$2.8 million for the state climatologist to expand the weather station network throughout the state, including the purchase and installation of hardware for new stations and \$700 thousand for 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 revert to the general fund.

Institutions organized under a higher education institution do not revert unexpended balances 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 HB48/HAWCS 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, 16 upgraded climate stations. Aside from the funding in this bill, an additional \$758.6 thousand 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/rl