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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 2/27/2025

SPONSOR Sen. Maestas/Rep. Borrego

BILL _____
NUMBER Senate Bill 50

SHORT TITLE Public Safety Telecommunications

ANALYST Lobaugh

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY25	FY26	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
\$0.0	\$200.0	Nonrecurring (Job Task Analysis)	General Fund
\$0.0	\$400.0	Nonrecurring (Telecommunicator Training Development)	General Fund
\$0.0	\$400.0	Nonrecurring (Officer Training Development)	General Fund
\$0.0	\$1,000.0	Nonrecurring (Total)	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
 *Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Distribution to NM State Police Telecommunicators	\$0.0	\$68.1	\$74.3	\$142.4	Recurring	Law Enforcement Retention Fund
Distribution to Other NM Gov Telecommunicators	\$0.0	\$556.7	\$665.2	\$1,221.9	Recurring	
Distribution to Private Telecommunicators	\$0.0	\$1,212.8	\$1,435.5	\$2,648.3	Recurring	
Subtotal	\$0.0	\$1,837.6	\$2,175.0	\$4,012.6	Recurring	
Law Enforcement Certification Board Staff	\$0.0	\$2,711.4	\$2,375.4	\$5,086.8	Recurring	General Fund
Law Enforcement Standards and Training Council Staff	\$0.0	\$589.3	\$531.8	\$1,121.1	Recurring	
DPS IT Staff	\$0.0	\$164.6	\$153.1	\$317.7	Recurring	
Subtotal	\$0.0	\$3,465.3	\$3,060.3	\$6,525.6	Recurring	
Total	\$0.0	\$5,302.9	\$5,235.3	\$10,538.2	Recurring	Both

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
 *Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to Senate Bill 173

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 50

Senate Bill 50 (SB50) amends the state Department of Public Safety Act and the Law Enforcement Training Act to add telecommunicators (i.e., call dispatchers of police, firefighting, or emergency medical services) who work at public or private safety agencies to state retention programs, funding allocations, and certification processes.

SB50 makes telecommunicators at public and private safety agencies eligible for retention funding from the state law enforcement retention fund. The law enforcement retention fund is a nonreverting, statutory fund administered by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for the purpose of providing additional funding to full-time certified law enforcement officers meeting certain levels of tenure in their jobs.

SB50 expands the authority of the New Mexico Law Enforcement Standards and Training Council to oversee all police officer and public safety telecommunicator standards, training, and educational requirements. The bill establishes new training program review cycles, requiring that continuing education programs are reviewed every two years, and the annual legal update is reviewed annually. The bill also makes the council responsible for setting standards and certification requirements for regional satellite training academies in alignment with accreditation standards. SB50 would make the council more administratively separate from DPS. Under current law, DPS provides staff support to the council. Under SB50, the council would be required to hire its own director and support staff to carry out its mission. The bill requires the council's director and staff to conduct research and allows the council's staff to contract with outside experts. The council's director and staff are required to have expertise in adult education and curriculum development and are required to use contracted resources to bring national expertise to the work of the Council. The bill requires the council to publish its rules in accordance with the State Rules Act. SB50 also amends the membership requirements of the council.

SB50 expands the powers and duties of the New Mexico Law Enforcement Certification Board. The bill grants the board the authority to deny admission to a certification program, suspend or revoke a police officer's or telecommunicator's certification (with evidence demonstrating probable cause of a threat to public safety, imminent harm, or agency liability), and conduct investigations to determine the fitness of police officers or public safety telecommunicators. SB50 requires the board to have a chief executive officer and staff that functions with complete independence from DPS, including independent budget authority. SB50 also amends the membership requirements of the board.

SB50 requires the basic law enforcement training curriculum to be based on a job task analysis conducted every five years and a comprehensive set of topics based on evidence- and science-

based national best practices.

The bill sets a schedule for the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy to update officer and public safety telecommunicator training programs with national standards and approval of the council. SB50 specifies that all curricula approved and in use need to be published on the academy's website and not published in the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC).

SB50 would require national accreditation of the academy through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (a national credentialing authority) by January 1, 2029. The bill would also require the council to determine the most appropriate accreditation standards for satellite academies. Under SB50, the academy and satellite academies need accreditation and certification in order to receive funds from the state law enforcement protection fund. The bill authorizes satellite academies to request up to \$300 thousand over three years to facilitate coming into compliance with additional curricular and accreditation requirements.

SB50 appropriates \$1 million on a nonrecurring basis from the general fund to DPS in FY26 for (1) a job task analysis to modernize public safety telecommunicator training (\$200 thousand), (2) contractor curriculum development and testing to implement public safety telecommuter training (\$400 thousand), and (3) contractor curriculum development for new in-service training for all police officers (\$400 thousand). Any unexpended or unencumbered balances remaining at the end of FY26 shall not revert to the general fund.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB50 appropriates \$1 million on a nonrecurring basis from the general fund to DPS in FY26 for (1) a job task analysis to modernize public safety telecommunicator training (\$200 thousand), (2) contractor curriculum development and testing to implement public safety telecommuter training (\$400 thousand), and (3) contractor curriculum development for new in-service training for all police officers (\$400 thousand). Any unexpended or unencumbered balances remaining at the end of FY26 shall not revert to the general fund.

DPS estimates that SB50 would make 2,479 full-time employee (FTE) telecommunicators in New Mexico eligible for funds from the state law enforcement retention fund, costing \$1.8 million in FY26 and \$2.2 million in FY27. Specifically, DPS reports 70 FTE telecommunicators at New Mexico State Police would be eligible, 773 FTE telecommunicators in other government entities would be eligible, and 1,636 telecommunicators from private sector entities would be eligible. DPS estimates the private sector telecommunicator cost based on data from ZIPPIA.com reporting that 66 percent of public safety dispatchers in the United States work in the private sector.¹

¹ DPS included an additional \$10 million in their annual cost estimate of SB50 under the assumption that all employees of public and private safety agencies could be eligible for funding from the law enforcement retention fund. SB50 limits eligibility for the law enforcement retention fund to full-time certified police officers and telecommunicators. Consequently, LFC staff did not include the additional \$10 million annual cost estimate in this fiscal impact report.

SB50 would require the New Mexico Law Enforcement Certification Board to operate independently of DPS, assume expanded responsibilities, and hire additional staff. DPS estimates the board would need 12 FTE, including a chief executive officer, a chief financial officer, an attorney, an investigator, a data analyst, a compliance officer, and administrative services staff. The additional operational cost for these positions from the general fund based on State Personnel Office classifications is \$2.7 million in FY26 and \$2.3 million in FY27.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DPS reports that making public safety agencies eligible for law enforcement retention funds could incentivize private sector telecommunicators to stay with private sector safety agencies, which may impact recruitment for public sector telecommunicator positions.

DPS reports that making private sector employees eligible for the law enforcement retention fund could negatively impact the fund's balance. The law enforcement retention fund had a cash balance of \$1.4 million as of January 2025.

The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) points out that under SB50 law enforcement representation would fall below 50 percent on the Law Enforcement Standards and Training Council, which is responsible for overseeing the training and standards of law enforcement.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

SB50 relates to Senate Bill 173, which would include public safety telecommunicators under the same public employee retirement association benefits as first responders.

CSL/hg/sgs