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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Brantley LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 3/10/2025
BILL
SHORT TITLE Enforcement of Game & Fish Laws NUMBER Senate Bill 291
ANALYST Gaussoin

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
EMNRD	No fiscal impact	\$100.0	\$100.0	\$200.0	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to Senate Bill 5

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

Attorney General (NMAG)

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From

Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 291

Senate Bill 291 (SB291) authorizes law enforcement officers of the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources to enforce game and fish laws (Chapter 17 of state statute) and removes a constraint on the authority of the Department of Game and Fish conservation officers that allows them to enforce laws under the Motor Vehicle and Criminal codes but only in an emergency. The bill would also authorize conservation officers to enforce the Boat Act.

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

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) reports state parks law enforcement officers would need additional law enforcement training to enforce game and fish laws at a cost of \$100 thousand. This cost is assumed to be recurring. The Department of Game and Fish did not provide analysis, but conservation officers, with existing authority to enforce motor vehicle and criminal laws, are unlikely to need significant additional training to enforce the Boat Act.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

EMNRD reports the addition of conservation officers to those enforcing the Boat Act would be a needed “force multiplier”:

Department conservation officers patrol within state parks as well as on navigable waters outside of state parks. As proposed by SB291, this expanded authority for department conservation officers will more broadly promote and support recreational boating safety, education, and enforcement.

However, EMNRD notes, SB291 does not authorize conservation officers to enforce the Boating While Intoxicated Act (66-13-1 NMSA 1978).

The Department of Public Safety cites no concerns with the expanded law enforcement authority that would be granted to conservation officers.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

SB291 relates to Senate Bill 5, which would restructure the State Game Commission, change the name of the Department of Game and Fish to the Department of Wildlife, and increase most hunting and fishing fees.

HG/hj/SL2