

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

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 02/20/2025

SPONSOR Padilla

BILL
NUMBER Senate Bill 475

SHORT TITLE Maps of Certain Districts

ANALYST Serna

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY25	FY26	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	\$200.0	Nonrecurring	General

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
Secretary of State	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact		Nonrecurring	General Fund
University of New Mexico	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact		Nonrecurring	General Fund

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

Relates to House Bill 121

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From
 Secretary of State (SOS)
 University of New Mexico (UNM)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From
 Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)
 New Mexico Association of Counties
 New Mexico Municipal League (NMML)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 475

Senate Bill 475 (SB475) requires local election districts to develop geographic information system (GIS) maps of the districts' boundaries in collaboration with the Secretary of State (SOS) and the Earth Data Analysis Center at the University of New Mexico (UNM). Local public

bodies will be required to submit their GIS maps to the SOS and county commissioners of every county within their districts by March 1, 2027, and in each year ending in two following the federal decennial census.

SB475 appropriates \$200 thousand from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for the purpose of supporting local districts to create GIS maps. The funds are designated for expenditure in FY26 and subsequent fiscal years. Any unspent funds at the end of a fiscal year will not revert to the general fund, allowing for continued support of the GIS mapping initiative.

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 appropriation of \$200 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY26 shall not revert to the general fund. Both the SOS and UNM have verified that implementing this bill would require no additional operating costs as they are already collaborating with local election districts on map updates.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The standardization of electoral maps to GIS format would enhance election administration accuracy. According to the SOS, "SB475 would standardize the required format of maps to the use of geographic information system data," while the National States Geographic Council confirms that GIS spatial data would improve voter registration verification and district assignment processes.

Current statutes already require SOS to "provide and maintain a suitable map showing the current geographical boundaries with designation of each precinct, local government, representative district and senatorial district in the county," with discretionary authority over map format under Section 1-3-1 NMSA 1978. Though SOS currently contracts with UNM's Earth Data Analysis Center for mapping services, this arrangement is not statutorily mandated. Both SOS and UNM acknowledge that districts must maintain updated boundaries, but UNM notes that SB475 would "allow these districts to comply with New Mexico state statute," suggesting the legislation would provide all districts with access to otherwise unaffordable GIS technology capabilities.

UNM's Earth Data Analysis Center emphasizes that if the bill passes their "decades of experience and an excellent working relationship with SOS and districts will contribute to efficiencies and reduce risks" associated with standardizing electoral mapping. However, SOS has raised concerns about limiting districts' options, stating that if SB475 passes, "local public bodies would be required to work with University of New Mexico's Earth Data Analysis Center" and "would be unable to leverage other entities to obtain geographic information system maps."

SOS highlights how the electoral mapping workflow of district maps being integrated into the state's voter database involves collaboration between local public bodies and county clerks:

Local public bodies currently provide maps in various formats and in various levels of detail to county clerks. These entities then work with those offices to ensure maps are accurately implemented in the state’s voter database for the purposes of elections.

To strengthen SB475's effectiveness the SOS recommends specific language be amended to the bill requiring the submission of maps to county clerks:

In Subsection C of Section 1, the local public bodies are required to submit geographic information system maps to county commissioners and SOS. It would also be appropriate for the maps to be submitted directly to county clerks.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

SB475 would establish a March 1, 2027 deadline for local public bodies to submit GIS-formatted maps to both the SOS and county commissioners in every county within their districts, with subsequent submissions required in each year ending in two following the federal decennial census. This timeline relates to HB121, the "County Redistricting Act," which would establish county redistricting commissions, requiring them to adopt district maps by September 1 of years ending in one, beginning in 2031. Should both bills be enacted, requiring the same GIS maps mandated in SB475 to be submitted to the newly created county redistricting commissions established under HB121, would ensure all entities involved in boundary determination have access to standardized mapping data.

ALTERNATIVES

SOS suggests SB475 continue to require specific formatting of maps but “leave open the opportunity for the districts to utilize local services or organizations” rather than “be required to work with University of New Mexico’s Earth Data Analysis Center.”

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Without the passage of SB475, some election districts without access to GIS technology would continue to rely on manual mapping methods potentially resulting in boundary disputes and voter assignment errors. Areas where population distributions have changed substantially since the last federal decennial census may be disproportionately affected by outdated maps.