

1 SENATE BILL 471

2 **57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Pat Woods

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10 AN ACT

11 RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT; CREATING A RAINFALL ENHANCEMENT
12 PILOT PROJECT TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE ROOSEVELT SOIL AND WATER
13 CONSERVATION DISTRICT; REQUIRING REPORTING; MAKING AN
14 APPROPRIATION.

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16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

17 SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] RAINFALL ENHANCEMENT PILOT
18 PROJECT--CREATED--ADMINISTRATION.--

19 A. The Roosevelt soil and water conservation
20 district shall create, develop and administer a one-year
21 "rainfall enhancement pilot project". The purpose of the
22 project is to demonstrate the efficacy of rainfall enhancement
23 as a mechanism to mitigate the effects of climate change and
24 drought.

25 B. The public interest, health, safety, welfare and

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1 necessity require scientific experimentation in the field of
2 artificial nucleation, commonly known as rainfall enhancement
3 or rainfall augmentation, and scientific efforts to develop and
4 increase natural precipitation of rain, snow and moisture in
5 any form contained in the atmosphere within the state are
6 encouraged in order to develop, conserve and protect the
7 natural water resources of the state and to safeguard life and
8 property.

9 C. The Roosevelt soil and water conservation
10 district and the board of regents of New Mexico state
11 university shall enter into a joint powers agreement for the
12 state climatologist and university extension services to
13 review, analyze and validate data from the rainfall enhancement
14 pilot project to create evidence-based weather modification
15 demonstration projects using current and evolving scientific
16 methods of rainfall enhancement and test the relative benefits
17 of those methods and the potential environmental risks.

18 D. All water derived as a result of rainfall
19 enhancement shall be considered a part of the natural water
20 supply in the same sense as if no rainfall enhancement pilot
21 project had been conducted, and any water so derived shall not
22 be subject to new appropriations but shall be administered and
23 distributed to users in accordance with existing water rights.

24 E. The act of rainfall enhancement pursuant to a
25 project funded in whole or in part by the state of New Mexico

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1 or authorized by the board of regents of New Mexico state
2 university shall not be the basis of any claim of liability.

3 SECTION 2. [NEW MATERIAL] REPORTING.--The state
4 climatologist and extension services shall:

5 A. establish forms and criteria for reporting data
6 and recordkeeping and cause a permanent record to be kept of
7 all pertinent data related to the rainfall enhancement pilot
8 project or research related to other factors that may be
9 affected by rainfall enhancement activities;

10 B. report the results of the rainfall enhancement
11 pilot project to the appropriate legislative interim committee;
12 and

13 C. provide a final report to the governor and
14 legislature that includes recommendations for improvements to
15 and the necessity of continuing the rainfall enhancement
16 project.

17 SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION.--One million two hundred
18 thousand dollars (\$1,200,000) is appropriated from the general
19 fund to the board of regents of New Mexico state university for
20 expenditure in fiscal year 2026 for the Roosevelt soil and
21 water conservation district to develop and administer a
22 rainfall enhancement pilot project. Any unexpended or
23 unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2026
24 shall revert to the general fund.