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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Reps. Terrazas, Dow, Vincent, Hernandez/
Sen. Ramos **LAST UPDATED** _____
ORIGINAL DATE 2/12/2025

SHORT TITLE Archaeology Field School Education
Program **BILL**
NUMBER House Bill 315

ANALYST Jorgensen

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY25	FY26	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	\$250.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 315

House Bill 315 (HB315) appropriates \$250 thousand from the general fund to board of regents at New Mexico State University (NMSU) for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)'s Soil and Water Conservation Commission to develop an archaeology field school education program statewide in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

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 \$250 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 revert to the general fund.

NMDA would use existing resources to implement the program funded through HB315 but notes that the department does not possess staff with the expertise required to implement the program. Thus, NMDA would need to release a request for proposals and hire a contractor with the appropriate professional qualifications.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DCA reports:

A statewide archaeology field program would likely benefit DCA's Office of Archaeological Studies (OAS) by increasing the pool of qualified archaeologists in New Mexico. OAS provides cost-reimbursable archaeological services to generate revenue and has at times faced a shortage of candidates for openings. If OAS actively supported the operation of the program by employing students, there would be a fiscal impact for which OAS would need financial support.

DCA highlights that critical wildfire recovery and fire mitigation are sometimes delayed in New Mexico due to a lack of qualified archaeologists to complete preparatory field studies in compliance with regulation.

CJ/hj/SR