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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Rodella DATE TYPED: 02/15/01 HB 105
 SHORT TITLE: Elk Population Study SB _____
 ANALYST: Dotson

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY01	FY02	FY01	FY02		
	\$ 650.0			Non-recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates SB73

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Department of Game and Fish.

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

HB 105 appropriates \$650.0 from the general fund to the Department of Game and Fish for the purpose of a comprehensive population survey for elk throughout the state.

Significant Issues

According to the Department of Game and Fish, the survey will utilize a more statistically reliable Sightability Survey methodology. The appropriation is estimated to provide the necessary funding for surveying approximately 33 of the states' significantly populated elk Game Management Units.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

According to the Department of Game and Fish, in order to comply with Department mandates identified in Chapter 17, NMSA that governs wildlife management (17-1-1 and 17-1-14), to appropriately address depredation (17-2-7.2) as it relates to the elk resource, and to include required considerations for safety, quality hunts, economic interests, etc. (17-2A-2), it is imperative for the Department to have the best available understanding of the elk resource's status.

According to the Department of Game and Fish, by having this better understanding of the elk population within each significantly populated Unit, the Department can establish harvest structures such that sport-hunting opportunity can be more appropriately distributed between private and public land hunters. This should help achieve a higher satisfaction level among all elk hunters while still assuring the viability of the state's elk resource. Stronger justification would be provided for implementing actions that aggressively address depredation problems. Using population information, in conjunction with available and potential interventions, depredation could be reduced to a more tolerant and manageable level. This, in turn, would increase the satisfaction level by landowners with the Department's effort to respond to and resolve human-wildlife conflicts.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$650.0 contained in this bill is a non-recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of the fiscal year 2002 would be reverted back to the General Fund.

According to the Department of Game and Fish, current Federal Aid documents identify this activity (population surveys) as reimbursable at a 75% rate. However, if the appropriation is granted, the Federal Aid documents will need to be amended to account for the increased funds over what is currently identified and budgeted.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

According to the Department of Game and Fish, results from the survey effort would provide the Department with extremely valuable information regarding elk population numbers. This information would assist the Department in developing appropriate strategies for addressing depredation, harvest management, population goals and recreational opportunities.

According to the Department of Game and Fish, by not enacting this bill, the Department's ability to determine a more accurate and precise estimate of the state's elk population would require an extended period of time. As a result, strategies implemented to address elk related problems will likely be more conservative and thereby take longer to effect a change.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Could this study be funded from Game and Fish revenue rather than by using general fund revenue?

PD/njw