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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Cisneros DATE TYPED 1/31/04 HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Develop NM Forest Health Plan SB SJM 12

ANALYST \_\_\_\_\_

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
			NFI		

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources (EMNRD)

Department of Agriculture (DOA)

### SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 12 requests the State Forester to develop and implement a forest health plan for New Mexico that will emulate the best management practices currently in use on the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation. The Mescalero Apache Tribe's forest management program, in concert with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mescalero Agency, has been nationally recognized for the effective and efficient way it has addressed many forest health issues.

This memorial recognizes that New Mexico's forests are in an unhealthy state due to a number of factors including an over density of fuels, invasive species and noxious weeds, years of aggressive fire prevention and the removal of fire from the natural scheme of nature. This memorial affirms drought conditions experienced in the last several years have exacerbated the unhealthy condition. The anticipated long-lasting drought situation will continue to decrease biodiversity and facilitate continued insect and disease outbreaks, which will add to the possibility of catastrophic fires within the New Mexico. This memorial states catastrophic fires present a threat to the lives and property of residents and acknowledges the potential impacts to watersheds and domestic water supplies.

SJM 12 also acknowledges the multi-jurisdictional nature of lands in New Mexico, the magnitude of the forest health problem, the cost to remedy and maintain forest ecosystems as well as the importance of effectively and efficiently using the resources of all available land management agencies.

This memorial asks the Forestry Division of the EMNRD to facilitate the development and implementation of a state-wide forest health plan that will bring together the resources of federal agencies, tribal, state, and local governments as well as private landowners to address forest health issues. The anticipated completion date for the New Mexico Forest Health Plan is October 2004.

### Significant Issues

SJM 12 recognizes the importance of reducing the overabundance of woody vegetation and the need to reestablish the natural ecology in New Mexico's forests. The State Forester is requested to develop and implement a forest health plan to improve the health of the forests in the state. Existing statewide efforts can provide a basis for plan development. This Memorial requires coordination between federal agencies, tribal, state, and local governments and private landowners.

An important aspect of this memorial is the instruction to set guidelines for coordination. This could serve as an important technique to improve the relationship between federal agencies, tribal, state, local entities and private landowners.

Recognition of the forest management work on the Mescalero Reservation is an important element to this memorial. Having a local forest that has been well managed at a watershed scale helps provide an example that other agencies and communities can emulate.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

EMNRD states the fiscal implications will be minimal. The Forestry Division anticipates being capable of implementing this memorial with existing resources.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

EMNRD will be able to implement the provisions of this memorial with existing staff.

**DW/dm**