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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Begaye DATE TYPED 2/01/05 HB 13

SHORT TITLE NMSU Farmington Enhancement Initiative SB _____

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$385.0			Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the appropriation for New Mexico State University in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to HB417

Relates to SB294

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

New Mexico State University (NMSU) – College of Agriculture and Home Economics (CAHE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 13 – Making an Appropriation to Implement the Enhancement Initiative at the New Mexico State University Agriculture Science Center in Farmington – appropriates \$385,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure in FY06 to implement an enhancement initiative at the Agricultural Science Center in Farmington that will employ a horticulturist and technical support staff to increase the teaching and research capacity of the center and to undertake a comprehensive feasibility study for infrastructural repairs and upgrades.

Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

NMSU-CAHE indicates that originally – from its inception in 1966 through 1992 – the Agricultural Science Center in Farmington was afforded a staff horticulturalist to conduct on-station research with respect to a vast range of crops. However, this position has remained vacant since 1992. HB13 seeks to fund one faculty horticulturalist, three technical support staff, one office support staff, and related program development and operational expenses. The horticulturalist will have a 100 percent appointment with NMSU, but duties will be split between 75 percent research at the Agricultural Science Center and 25 percent contract teaching at San Juan College in Farmington. CHE indicates that request was not in the list of priority projects submitted by NMSU to CHE for review. Accordingly, this request was not included in CHE's funding recommendation for FY06.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$385,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMSU would retain oversight of the program and the horticulturalist and support positions will be administered through the NMSU Agricultural Science Center in Farmington as stipulated by the policies and procedures of NMSU.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to the appropriation for NMSU in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to HB417 and SB294 in that both bills seek to appropriate \$25,000 from the general fund for expenditure in FY06 to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for development of a feasibility study and strategic plan, including infrastructure requirements for the Agricultural Science Center at New Mexico State University's Farmington campus.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSU-CAHE indicates the Agricultural Science Center at Farmington supports crop improvement, weed control, and water/irrigation management research interests and serves the agricultural needs of the culturally diverse client groups found in the San Juan River basin of northwest New Mexico and the Four Corners region. Located southwest of Farmington, the center is the only agricultural research facility in the state of New Mexico on the western side of the Continental Divide. NMSU-CAHE additionally notes that, for nearly forty years, scientists from the Farmington center have successfully sought to enhance the economic vitality of the Four Corners region through applied research, development, and extension. Collectively, their impacts include:

- More than 1,000 varieties of different agronomic and horticultural crops have been tested, including: winter wheat, spring wheat, winter barley, spring barley, oats, corn, alfalfa, crambe, dry beans, potatoes, chile pepper, lettuce, tomato, green bean, onion, apple, pear, peach, nectarine, cherry, grape, cucumber, pea, pumpkin, and winter and summer squash.

Other research has tested potential pasture species, poplar trees, Christmas trees, and such turf grass species as blue grass, rye grass, wheat grass, fescue, buffalo grass, blue grama, Bermuda grass, and zoysia grass for suitability in the Four Corners region.

- Researchers developed water production functions (relationships between yield and crop water-use) and crop coefficients (for irrigation scheduling) for many crops including: potatoes, corn, alfalfa, winter wheat, barley, pinto beans, canola, pasture grass, onions, chile peppers, tomatoes, and various turfgrass species. These functions can be used to assist in efficient irrigation management and in making important economic decisions related to water and crop production.
- Current research on micro and drip irrigation may contribute to substantial water savings for residents of the Four Corners region.
- Since 1980, many producers of field and horticultural crops have adopted herbicides for weed control based on our research. This includes control of Canada thistle and Russian knapweed, commonly referred to as the weed of the Four Corners.
- Registration of the herbicide Pursuit, for use in pinto beans, was based on research carried out at the Agricultural Science Center at Farmington.
- Results of research on the rehabilitation of disturbed lands with native and non-native grasses could potentially improve more than 50,000 acres of well sites and pipeline rights-of-way in the San Juan oil/gas production basin.
- Agricultural Science Center staff have designed and taught courses at San Juan College and the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI). Training seminars, agricultural classes, on-farm demonstrations, and workshops have been presented to thousands of farmers and others responsible for agricultural and horticultural production on urban lots and farms ranging in size from several acres to more than 65,000 acres.
- Between 1970 and 2000, San Juan County yields of potatoes, corn, wheat, and alfalfa have increased 350 percent, 170 percent, 139 percent, and 69 percent, respectively. Much of the increased productivity can be traced to practices derived from research at the Agricultural Science Center at Farmington. The value of just these four crops in San Juan County was more than \$33 million in 2000.

Drawn from the fact that some 60 percent of the total surface water that flows downstream through New Mexico passes through the San Juan basin into the Colorado River system, NMSU-CAHE reflects that water resources research remains a cornerstone of the center's activities. Working closely with the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, other small-scale Native American farmers, long-time area farmers, and recently arrived urban immigrants, the center has identified horticultural research and development as the agricultural discipline of most benefit to these groups. Further, NMSU-CAHE anticipates that a collaborative program between the center and San Juan College will provide a mechanism for addressing both the teaching and the research needs of the community.