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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Tsosie DATE TYPED 2-23-05 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Native American Home Wheelchair Modifications SB 685

ANALYST Collard

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$200.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 729

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD)

Human Services Department (HSD)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 685 appropriates \$200 thousand from the general fund to ALTSD for the purpose of providing wheelchair and mobility-related accessibility modifications to the homes of elderly or disabled Native Americans in McKinley, Cibola and San Juan counties. The bill directs the department to use a local supervising entity with experience in mobility home modification services.

Significant Issues

ALTSD indicates, for many New Mexico Native American residents, providing services to their disabled and elderly family members can be a significant cost. The department recognizes that many of these residents may jeopardize service rather than utilize limited resources.

DVR indicates the Governor's Commission on Disability has experienced staff to provide this type of service to home owners as well as contractors and also has experienced staff to administer these funds effectively and efficiently.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200 thousand 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.

According to the Governor's Commission on Disability's GAP Program, an average cost of providing accessibility modifications in a home such as ramps, grab bars, and door widening is \$7.5 thousand. This cost does not include bathroom modifications, which is significantly higher at about \$15 thousand per major modification. At the average cost, ALTSD states the proposed appropriation would serve approximately 26 citizens.

RELATIONSHIP

Senate Bill 685 relates to House Bill 729, titled Home Modifications for Disabled Persons. The major difference is the fiscal agent is the Governor's Commission on Disability.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

DVR indicates the bill does not specify measurable outcomes or expectations and does not identify "local supervising entity with experience in providing mobility home modifications." DVR also notes experienced staff in Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and American National Standards Institute (ANSI) are required to know how to discuss, plan for, and approve home modifications and most contractors are vaguely aware of both UFAS and ANSI standards.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTSD notes, with the governor's signing of the ADAPT resolution supporting home and community based services and the United States Supreme Court's OLMSTEAD decision, providing accessibility modifications for individuals living with disabilities will allow them to regain their status in the community by remaining in their homes rather than living in institutions as well as maintain the quality of life to help promote a more safe home environment and improve health living.

DVR notes the following issues:

- Cost of home modifications and number of modifications needed continue to rise.
- Home building specifications do not universally have standards consistent for entry, egress, and routing living functions such as accessible bathrooms, accessible tubs and showers, wider doors ways in the interior of the home, wider hallways, entry ways into the home without thresholds which are barriers to users of wheel chairs, walkers, scooter, accessible kitchens with appliances, cabinets, and sinks at levels usable by individuals using mobility devices or with limited use of arms, hands, and fingers.
- Many individuals with disabilities have limited income.
- Many to most individuals with disabilities do not have means to pay for home modifications.
- An individual's sense of independence is directly tied into one's sense to navigate within the

home, ability to utilize appliances, interior spaces, bathrooms, and kitchens. DVR indicates this is especially true for individuals with disabilities.

- Individuals with disabilities without such modifications are “prisoners” within their homes unable to leave and return at will and not able to effectively function within the home.
- Individuals with disabilities require increased costs of personal assistance when they cannot function within their homes as independently as possible.
- Elderly and disabled Native Americans are among the most underserved or unserved populations.
- Elderly and disabled Native American may require assistance of an advocate knowledgeable of Native American culture, language, lifestyle, etc. to effectively assist in home modification.
- A home modification advocate may help in people being more comfortable in having their homes modified.

KBC/rs