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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Pinto DATE TYPED 03/04/05 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Navajo Radiation Exposure Act Compensation SB SM 5/aSIAC

ANALYST Weber

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Indian Affairs (DIA)

Department of Environment (DOE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Indian Affairs Committee Amendment

Following each of the five instances the word “Navajo” is used the words “and other” are inserted. This broadens the memorial to include other Indian people.

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 5 (SM 5), urges Congress to improve compensation benefits and the awarding process for New Mexico Navajo citizens eligible for benefits under the Federal Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). In addition, SM 5 would urge Congress to appropriate increased funds to allow for an adequate number of staff to process Navajo claims and to amend RECA to increase the number of years that claims can be made that correspond to the duration of open mines or to the year 1990.

Significant Issues

The Indian Affairs Department contributes.

Senate Memorial 5 -- Page 2

The need for compensation resulting from the effects of uranium mining operations in northwestern New Mexico has long been established with the enactment of RECA. Since RECA's enactment and subsequent amendments, however, the needs of the large number of eligible recipients remain unmet. Only 558 of 6,000 potentially eligible Navajo claimants have received some type of compensation in the past fourteen years. And, only 3,755 of these claimants are successfully registered. Approximately 5,000 claims are not currently filed. A large reason for these high numbers of unprocessed claims, is the lack of adequate staff to process the Navajo claims. Currently, there are only three caseworkers that process the more than 4000 Navajo claims that have been submitted to their office.

MW/lg:yr