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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Papen DATE TYPED 02-21-05 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Water Resources Research Institute SB 117

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION

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

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates HB193
Relates to HB192, SB113, SB100

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Finance Authority
New Mexico State University (NMSU), Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI)
Commission on Higher Education (CHE)
New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 117 – Relating to Higher Education, Creating the Water Resources Research Institute – establishes a Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI) division at New Mexico State University (NMSU). Participating with the WRRI will be the University of New Mexico, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, New Mexico Highlands University, Eastern New Mexico University and Western New Mexico University. The purposes of the institute are to:

- (1) provide research and training in water conservation, planning and management; atmospheric-surface-ground water relations; and water quality;

- (2) transfer water information through the use of technical and miscellaneous publications, newsletters, conferences and presentations;
- (3) provide expertise, specialized assistance and information to address water problems; and
- (4) cooperate with local, state and federal water agencies.

The NMSU Board of Regents shall prepare reports showing the progress and condition of the WRI and – through the NMSU Board of Regents – the WRI may receive legislative appropriations and other public and private items of value.

There is no appropriation attached to this bill.

Significant Issues

NMSU indicates that the WRI was originally authorized by the 1964 Water Resources Act and was one of the first institutes approved in the United States. The overall mission of the WRI is to develop and disseminate knowledge that will assist the state and nation in solving water problems. Through the funding of research and demonstration projects, the institute utilizes the knowledge and experience of researchers throughout the state to solve New Mexico's pressing water problems. Research is conducted by faculty and students within the departmental structure of each New Mexico university campus. In-house staff administers the institute's programs, conducts special research projects, and produces a variety of issue reports.

This bill formally establishes the WRI as a NMSU division and, as WRI indicates, statutory authority will stabilize and expand the research program in terms of technical research product, student training, and information for water management with additional data.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

While there is no appropriation attached to this particular bill, CHE's *2005-2006 Higher Education Funding Recommendation* reflects the following history for water resources research:

- 2003-04 (Recurring Appropriation) - \$455.9
- 2004-05 (Recurring Appropriation) - \$438.0

For FY06 CHE recommends \$590.8, a 34.9 percent increase over FY05.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

WRI notes that no new FTEs will be required.

OSE suggests that it has been the primary agency involved in water conservation, planning and management, and education. Coordination between NMSU and OSE would be necessary to ensure that there is not a duplication of efforts and that NMSU activities interface in a productive way with ongoing OSE initiatives. OSE further suggests this coordination between OSE and NMSU should be added to the language.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP OR RELATIONSHIP

Duplicates HB193 in that HB193 also seeks to establish a Water Resources Research Institute division at New Mexico State University.

Relates to HB192 and SB113 in that both HB192 and SB113 seek to appropriate \$200,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure in FY06 for the Water Resources Research Institute to increase research in water conservation, planning and management.

Relates to SB100 in that SB100 seeks to appropriate \$750,000 to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University to conduct water management research and education programs in FY06. The appropriation is allocated to (1) the agricultural experiment station in the amount of \$375,000 and (2) the cooperative extension service in the amount of \$375,000.

OTHER SUBSTANTUIVE ISSUES

OSE suggest that there has been substantial research conducted and currently being conducted by the OSE in the field of water conservation and management, therefore it is important that the WRRI's research be appropriately targeted and closely coordinated with the OSE, Governor's Drought Task Force, and other agencies that are involved in the same fields, to avoid duplicative efforts and activities.

BFW/njw