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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-4-06

SPONSOR Balderas LAST UPDATED _____ HB 619

SHORT TITLE Mora County Ambulance Services SB _____

ANALYST Hadwiger

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$60.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 619 appropriates \$60 thousand from the general fund to the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) in FY07 to contract for ambulance services in Mora County.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$60 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY07 would revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DFA noted that Mora County Ambulance Service is funded annually from the State of New Mexico from EMS funds. The director of emergency services applies for funds each year, which are allocated based on the needs of each department. The appropriation in HB619 will be used for operational costs of the Mora County Ambulance Service. Mora County has eight emer-

gency medical technicians who are volunteers. In that capacity, they are required to answer emergency calls and participate in ambulance runs. They're paid a minimal amount of compensation for working in 6-hour shifts in addition to mileage and per diem for each ambulance run made. This appropriation will assist with the operational costs associated with the volunteer EMT's.

DOH added that the agency has designated Mora County as one of the most underserved, rural/frontier regions of the state in terms of health care delivery, services and need. Within New Mexico Emergency Medical Services Region I (14 counties of northern and northwestern New Mexico) Mora County and the Interstate 25 Corridor (including San Miguel and Catron Counties) is considered the area with the highest need for maintaining and developing EMS training, personnel and infrastructure. Vehicle crashes are the third leading cause of death in Mora County and account for a major portion of the over 320 EMS responses that occur there annually. Residences are spread out and personal transportation is limited for some families. The ambulance service is a critical safety net for both residents and tourists. The ambulance service which serves Mora Valley is certified by the Public Regulation Commission as a Basic Life Support ambulance service, but occasionally they provide more advanced (EMT-Intermediate) level of response. They have a physician medical director, EMS service director and a training coordinator. They respond when dispatched for all medical and traumatic health emergencies within the Village of Mora and all of western Mora County.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

DFA indicated Mora County will be the fiscal agent of this appropriation. Mora County officials indicate the County supports this project and has the capacity to administer this appropriation. This appropriation will be administered by LGD/DFA, who has the capacity to fund and monitor the project.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

DOH noted that an appropriation has been made for the past few years to Mora County to contract for ambulance services. These funds have historically been administered by DOH rather than DFA.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

DFA explained Mora County has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place with DFA for budget and financial oversight. The purpose of the MOU is for the Local Government Division to provide the County with assistance to determine financial and budget solutions to past and current budget deficits. The MOU outlines several conservational measures for the County to practice, to improve its financial status. The County is practicing budgetary cutbacks, as well as seeking governmental financial assistance. One of the most extreme of the budgetary cutbacks has been the reduction in work force. County employees' have had their work week cut from 40 to 32 hours and elected officials' salaries have been cut by 20%. LGD is aware of the ongoing financial hardships within Mora County and supports any financial assistance provided, including this appropriation.