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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-4-06

SPONSOR Robinson LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Tools for Schools Program SB 456

ANALYST Hadwiger

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$50.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)

New Mexico Department of Environment (NMED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 456 appropriates \$50 thousand from the general fund to the New Mexico Department of Environment (NMED) in FY07 to conduct environmental assessments of public schools pursuant to the tools for schools program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$50 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

NMED indicated that the US Environmental Protection Agency has ranked indoor air pollution among the top-five environmental risks to public health. Good indoor air quality (IAQ) is an essential component of a healthy indoor environment, and is proven to help schools reach their primary goal of educating children. Failure to prevent or respond promptly to IAQ problems can

increase long- and short-term health problems of students and staff and aggravate asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

DOH added that this bill will improve indoor air quality in New Mexico public schools through an assessment process conducted by school teams. These teams would be comprised of personnel, administrative staff, teachers, nurses, or students. The teams would assess and make recommendations of needed actions (e.g., roof leaks or poor air and heating/ ventilation) to the NMED and monitor the department's follow-through. Poor air quality is one of the most serious environmental threats to public health. Indoor air quality is a growing concern in the United States, especially in schools. It is known that specific health issues such as asthma can be directly linked to poor indoor air.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There is a current Tools for Schools Program operated by NMED through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Children, Youth and Families Department, the Department of Health, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department and the Public School Facility Authority.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMED pointed out that every type of building has the potential for poor IAQ, including schools. This makes environmental assessments vital in order to determine IAQ in schools. While some schools have minor problems, others may have significant ones, increasing the potential for long- and short- term health problems. Possible impacts are elevated rates of absenteeism among students and staff, and accelerated deterioration and reduced efficiency of heating and cooling equipment and systems.

DH/nt