

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/09/07

SPONSOR Vigil LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB 409

SHORT TITLE NM Highlands Forestry Institute SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Moser

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

| Appropriation |         | Recurring<br>or Non-Rec | Fund<br>Affected |
|---------------|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| FY07          | FY08    |                         |                  |
|               | \$430.0 | Recurring               | General Fund     |
|               |         |                         |                  |

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates SB 55 Relates to HB 278. Relates to SB 57.  
Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act (HB 7)

#### Responses Received From

New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)  
Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)  
Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission (ISC)  
New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 409 appropriates \$430,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico Highlands University for expenditure in FY 2008 to the forest and watershed institute.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$430,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 2008 shall revert to the General Fund.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Northern Arizona University, Colorado State University and New Mexico Highlands University are jointly developing forest restoration institutes (Institutes) in each of the three states pursuant to PL 108-317, signed into law in October 2004. The purposes of the non-regulatory Institutes

are to bring the unique strengths of the member universities individually, collectively and in partnership with other institutions to help support land managers and their collaborators working to achieve comprehensive ecological restoration treatments on the ground.

New Mexico Highlands University has the only certified forestry program in the state. It is a unique opportunity for NMSU to train technical and professional forest and watershed managers for the increasing number of jobs in this field, both in the state and elsewhere.

New Mexico First held a town hall in Las Vegas called *“Looking to the Future: A Town Hall on New Mexico’s Watersheds and Forests”*, jointly sponsored by the FWRI, EMNRD, and NMDA and attended by 130 residents of the State. The Town Hall included two recommendations to support FWRI as an institute and to provide separate, recurring state budget appropriations.

New Mexico’s two recently adopted statewide strategic plans for watershed management (The Forest and Watershed Health Plan (FWHP) and The Non-native Phreatophyte/Watershed Management Plan (NNPP) both supported the Institute and identified important roles for it in implementation of these plans,

A request for an increase of \$25,300 was submitted by NMHU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review. The Department’s funding recommendation for FY08 is a continuation of the recurring amount of \$249,700.

**PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

Federal legislation calls for a preliminary review of the accomplishments of all the Institutes in 2006, followed in 2009 by a substantive evaluation that will determine whether the Institute will continue to receive federal support. The question of state support may enter into this review.

**CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act (HB 7, p. 196):

|                                |                     |                |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                                | <u>General Fund</u> | <u>Federal</u> |
| Forest and Watershed Institute | \$249.7             | \$255.4        |

House Bill 278 is a conceptual duplicate but differs in format.  
Senate Bill 57 appropriates \$433,000 to NMHU “to fund the forest and watershed institute.”

GM/mt