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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/15/07

SPONSOR Campos LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Youth Involvement in Disaster Issues SB 822

ANALYST Lucero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

| Appropriation | | Recurring or Non-Rec | Fund Affected |
|---------------|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| FY07 | FY08 | | |
| | \$300.0 | Recurring | General Fund |
| | | | |

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)
 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC)
 Department of Public Safety (DPS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 822 appropriates three hundred thousand (\$300,000) from the general fund to Children, Youth and Families Department for expenditure in fiscal year 2008 for a rapid response conservation corps pilot project to support New Mexico youth involvement in environmental disaster issues.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of three hundred thousand (\$300,000) contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2008 shall revert to the general fund. The bill declares an emergency for the public peace, health and safety.

The appropriation is not part of the Children Youth and Families Department budget request and is not included in the Executive recommendation.

The funding may leverage Corporation for National and Community Service federal funding to communities and projects where Rapid Response Corps exist.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This bill is designed to create a pilot project for a conservation corps to respond quickly to environmental disaster issues. The bill does not define what “environmental disaster issues” are. Therefore, CYFD would need to exercise discretion in funding projects from the appropriation.

Depending on the type of environmental disaster issue involved, mechanical equipment may be required, such as use of chain saws. In those instances, only those 18 years or older would be eligible to participate as a member of a conservation corps rapid response team. Consequently, the makeup of conservation corps response teams will be dictated by the type of disaster and equipment needed to respond since child labor laws prohibit those below 16 from being around mechanical equipment and restrict the type of mechanized activities those 16 and 17 years of age can perform. CYFD would need to take these factors into consideration in establishing the makeup of response teams under the pilot project.

Environmental disasters occur all over the State. If the rapid response conservation corps is intended to respond statewide, an amount greater than \$300,000 may be needed to outfit and train the crews. To be away from their home base overnight, crews will need; food, tents, sleeping bags, large storage containers, packs, transportation, their own equipment specific to the environmental disaster and other items needed to keep a rapid response team out, possibly for days at a time. Again, CYFD would need to take these factors into consideration in establishing the scope of the pilot project.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

None identified for CYFD. The Rapid Response Corps supports multiple Children’s Cabinet focus areas.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

If passed, the bill will have a slight administrative impact on Children, Youth and Families Department that the bill does not address.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None identified

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The bill declares an emergency which makes the funds available immediately after being signed; however, the bill does not make provisions for the appropriation to be expended in Fiscal Year 07.

The bill does not define an age group for the children. It is also unclear if the children would volunteer their time or if they would receive compensation.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

AmeriCorps (which is administered by CYFD) is a program for youth. AmeriCorps helped Gulf Coast communities recover from the devastating 2005 hurricanes. 75 AmeriCorps members helped the Housing Authority of Meridian, Miss., to help rebuild homes; 150 members helped the Trinity Christian Community in New Orleans to do case management and rebuilding, and 96 AmeriCorps members helped provide preparedness training for natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and fire safety through local American Red Cross chapters across the county.

ALTERNATIVES

- The New Mexico National Guard has a youth program called Youth ChalleNGe. The program's mission is to provide a structured environment where participants learn discipline, develop self-esteem, develop an understanding of the importance of giving back to the community, become physically fit and the ability to earn a high school degree (and possible credit hours towards higher education).
- The National Guard is the host agency and has quick access to supplies, equipment, transportation and other items needed to support crews away from their home base.
- Youth ChalleNGe has been in existence since 2001 and could incorporate the rapid response environmental disaster conservation corps pilot program.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Status Quo

DL/csd