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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-19-07

SPONSOR Griego LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Winter Cloud Seeding Pilot Project SB 1029

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
none	\$300.0	Non-Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 1029 seeks to appropriate \$300,000 from the general fund to the Interstate Stream Commission for expenditure in fiscal year 2008 to perform the preparation tasks required for a future winter cloud seeding pilot project in the Sangre de Cristo and Jemez mountains. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2008 shall revert to the general fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

OSE indicates that evaluation of the benefits (and/or damages) derived from winter cloud seeding is difficult. Performance of “preparation tasks” should include estimates of damages and benefits, in addition to contractual considerations for conduct of a winter cloud seeding program. Future costs of the proposed program may include remediation costs for damages. Existing staff of the OSE/ISC does not include cloud seeding expertise.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

OSE advises that because of a resurgence of weather modification research and cloud seeding operations throughout the western United States, motivated by increasing water demands and drought, the ISC expects a marked increase in programs under the New Mexico Weather Control Act. Weather modification is identified in the state water plan and most regional water plans as a potential source of new water supply. Beginning in January 2004, a subgroup of the Jemez y Sangre Regional Water Planning group of northern New Mexico has conducted Cloud Seeding Workshops in Santa Fe. Nationally prominent scientists, meteorologists, cloud seeding operators and consultants actively involved in weather modification research and operations throughout the western United States have provided presentations at the workshops. Santa Fe business interests co-sponsored the workshops that were attended by a broad range of regional public officials.

OSE concludes that the Jemez y Sangre group has used the information provided from the workshops to develop a detailed project plan and scope of work for a demonstration program to evaluate regional atmospheric conditions and better understand operational and assessment requirements for conducting cloud seeding operations in northern New Mexico.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

OSE suggests that given the variability of the natural meteorological environment, great care must be taken in the planning, execution, and assessment of cloud seeding projects.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

OSE states, “Cloud seeding activities show promise in terms of development of alternate water resources. If this bill is not enacted, there will be no state support.”

BFW/nt