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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 3/09/2007

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Increase School Student Outdoor Participation SJM 66

ANALYST Schuss

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY07	FY08	FY09	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$15.0*		\$15.0*	Non- Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)
*EMNRD estimate

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 66 requests a study to determine ways to increase the participation of public school students outdoors on public lands.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

EMNRD reports that no appropriation accompanies SJM 66 and no funds are allocated in HB 2 presently to complete the study requested. The State Parks Division (SPD) estimates that it would require approximately \$15,000 in staff time and related expenses to prepare the study. While SJM 66 would require SPD resources to prepare the study requested, programs that are successful in increasing the participation of students outdoors on public lands also have the potential to attract more visitors to state parks and build long-term park visitor loyalty, thereby increasing revenue.

Other departments associated with the task force are also likely to incur some additional cost.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Senate Joint Memorial 66 states that New Mexico has a variety of exceptional public lands that provide quality outdoor learning environments and many children do not have access to public lands. Only 5 percent of students in kindergarten through grade twelve have access to public lands on a regular basis. Obesity is on the rise in New Mexico, especially in young children and outdoor experiences encourage physical activity, which is a key in preventing obesity.

There is a need for hands-on teaching materials for children who begin to access the outdoors through their experiences in the public schools and there is a need for transportation for children who want to experience outdoor education programs. Coordination among state agencies will be required to increase the use of public lands by students.

A partnership between the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the Public Education Department would have enormous potential to inspire education of New Mexico's children, benefit state parks and better serve the state.

The legislature of the State of New Mexico requests that the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department convene a task force composed of representatives of the Department of Game and Fish, the Public Education Department, the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the New Mexico Retail Association to plan for ways to maximize student use of the state's precious public lands. SJM 66 also requests that the task force report its conclusions to the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee by November 2007 on effective ways to increase student participation in outdoor education programs, on how much state funding will be required for educational materials development, transportation and other expenses and on specific steps the Legislature can take in the prevention of obesity of public school students.

According to PED, in 2005, the Legislature passed SJM 24, *The New Mexico Outdoor Education Initiative: Improve Education and State Parks Relationship*, requesting the PED and State Parks Division to prepare a study outlining opportunities for increased partnerships between them. The result is a partnership between the Division and PED to use the unique resources provided by the state's parks for improved and expanded outdoor education programs. The report produced through this partnership, "Making New Mexico Schools Work Outdoors," cites recent research indicating outdoor, interactive education can increase student test scores, reduce discipline problems, build citizenry skills and resource stewardship ethics and increase teacher job satisfaction.

EMNRD states that while there is strong interest in the "Outdoor Classroom" concept, which has been endorsed by the LESC, and a clear connection between outdoor activity and reducing childhood obesity, there are questions on how expanded statewide programs for school children in these areas might be funded. Some 20 different states and municipalities around the country are either beginning or expanding such programs. The study requested by SJM 66 could examine a wide variety of options for legislators and policy makers to consider.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

PED notes that participation in this task force could impact the public school performance measures relating to the percent of stakeholders who rate their involvement with public schools

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as positive and the percent of elementary and middle school students who achieve at the level of proficient or above on the standards-based assessment in mathematics and language arts. It also supports the Math and Science Bureau's goal to improve student achievement in science.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to HB 359, HB 220/SB552, HB 1232

BS/csd