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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR	<u>Wallace</u>	ORIGINAL DATE	<u>01-30-08</u>	HJM	<u>28</u>
		LAST UPDATED	<u></u>	SB	<u></u>
SHORT TITLE	<u>Native Plant Day</u>				
				ANALYST	<u>Aubel</u>

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Memorial 28 requests the Governor designate the last Saturday in August “Native Plant Day” to increase public awareness of and appreciation for the native plants of New Mexico.

The memorial requests that copies of HJM 28 be transmitted to the Governor and the President of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HJM 28 does not directly carry a fiscal impact. However, any public education projects initiated by the memorial could impact participating agencies’ operating budgets.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provide the following background information regarding native plants in New Mexico:

New Mexico plant diversity is very high with over 3,200 known native species, which ranks New Mexico as fourth in the nation for plant diversity (only behind California, Texas and Arizona). Approximately 100 species are endemic to the state and occur nowhere else in the world. All New Mexico wildlife species are dependent upon native plants for habitat and forage; native range plants support the livestock ranching industry; all timber and other wood products are derived from native trees; and the cover of native plant communities protect soil from erosion and contribute to the health of New Mexico watersheds. Indigenous New Mexico cultures have relied upon native plants for a bounty

of traditional foods and herbal medicines, and modern urban landscapes can and do conserve scarce water resources by planting hardy native plants that are naturally adapted to the arid environment of New Mexico.

According to the University of Montana INVADERS project, prior to 1907 -- during a period of little regulation of the importation of goods and agricultural commerce -- about one hundred exotics per decade were establishing in the five northwest states. During the period of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, the number of successful introductions declined to about 40 species per decade. The study maintains that with the expansion of global travel and commerce since the 1960's, the number of new introductions is again approaching the pre-twentieth century rate -- despite the enactment of numerous regulatory mechanisms.

As of June 11, 2004, the database maintained by the INVADER project lists 33 invasive species for New Mexico, with five listed as Class C—those that are widespread throughout the state.

The Bureau of Land Management states that one of the greatest obstacles to achieving its primary goal of promoting ecosystem health is the rapid expansion of invasive weeds across public lands. The agency notes that these invasive plants can dominate and often cause permanent damage to natural plant communities. BLM maintains that if not eradicated or controlled, noxious weeds will jeopardize the health of the public lands and the myriad of activities that occur on them.

Studies show that the economic impact of noxious weeds can be substantial. For example, a 2003 study from the University of North Dakota estimated the grazing capacity lost to leafy spurge in the four-state region of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming would represent a direct economic impact of \$37 million annually and a total (direct plus secondary) impact of \$120 million. When wildland impacts were included, the study reported a total annual economic impact of leafy spurge in the four-state region was estimated to be \$129 million.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

EMNRD suggests that enhancing public appreciation of native plants could have positive performance implications by increasing awareness and public support for the Forestry Division's Endangered Plant Program. The agency states that several native plants -- such as piñon, juniper, sagebrush, creosote -- have been mislabeled as "invasive species" by some private and public land managers in New Mexico. The agency concludes that enhanced understanding of these indigenous (not invasive) species could help shift the focus of native vegetation management towards ecosystem and watershed health and sustainability.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

A request to the Governor to designate a day "Native Plant Day" will not be initiated and the opportunity to generate greater public interest and awareness of New Mexico native plants and the threats from invasive species will be lost.