

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 73

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .198672.1

Short Title: School Bus Security & GPS Systems

Sponsor(s): Representative Christine Trujillo

Analyst: David Craig

Date: January 30, 2015

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Bill Summary:

HB 73 makes an appropriation to the Public Education Department (PED) for expenditure in FY 16 to provide for installation and operation of security and global positioning system (GPS) devices in public school buses.

Fiscal Impact:

\$889,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY 16. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 16 shall revert to the General Fund.

Substantive Issues:

HB 73 reflects the work of the 2012 and 2013 LESC Subcommittees on Public School Transportation. During the 2013 interim, the subcommittee discussed the value of GPS devices for increasing student safety and providing necessary data for a reevaluation of the school transportation funding formula.

The provisions of HB 73 were again endorsed by the LESC during the committee's December 2014 interim meeting for consideration of the 2015 Legislature.

According to the PED bill analysis:

- New Mexico previously purchased and installed GPS in all New Mexico public school to-and-from school buses;
- the units were procured through a request for proposal (RFP) process and purchased through a capital outlay appropriation costing the state approximately \$1.0 million;
- the company that was selected for supplying the GPS systems as well as providing monitoring access was ZONAR;
- with the lack of appropriations to pay for upgrades and annual monitoring, the existing devices may not be functional; and
- a few school districts that have chosen to continue the use of the GPS are paying for upgrades and monitoring services with operational funds.

Background:

During the 2012 interim, LESC Transportation Subcommittee members heard testimony from Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) staff regarding the findings of a May 2011 LFC School Bus Transportation Program Evaluation. The program evaluation included findings regarding the expenditure of \$966,400 from a 2007 capital outlay appropriation to purchase a Statewide Public School Bus Global Positioning System that was awarded to ZONAR Systems. As part of its contract with ZONAR, PED also purchased the ZPass system, which records student ridership. This system was piloted in Deming Public Schools, with plans to expand the pilot to include Albuquerque Public Schools, Las Cruces Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, and Gallup-McKinley County Schools as additional pilots using 2010 General Obligation Bond funds.

The PED response to the LFC program evaluation stated that GPS for the state of New Mexico would provide accurate mileage and ridership data, which are a fundamental component of the current transportation formula but will require buy-in from the Legislature before the state continues with this service.

Also according to the LFC program evaluation report, there is potential for:

- PED to recapture the annual subscription fee if the data are analyzed and used properly, by:
 - monitoring bus idle time to reduce fuel consumption;
 - reducing administrative costs associated with the need for districts to manually capture and report data; and
 - reducing the amount of time spent verifying ridership while improving security; and
- the GPS-driven system to:
 - significantly increase the division's management of the buses;
 - improve administration of the transportation program;
 - reduce cost; and
 - reduce manpower.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HTPWC

Related Bills:

HB 164 *School Transportation Info Reporting*
HB 166 *Charter School Transportation Agreements*
SB 129 *School District Liens on Some School Buses*
SB 20 *School Bus Fuel Gross Receipts*