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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Martinez, K **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/15/15
LAST UPDATED 2/23/15 **HB** 317/aHGEIC

SHORT TITLE Alternate Voting Locations **SB** _____

ANALYST Jorgensen

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Recurring	County General Fund and SOS Operating Budget

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Secretary of State (SOS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HGEIC Amendment

The House Government, Elections & Indian Affairs Committee amendment clarifies that an alternate voting location should be established where more than 500 voters reside within a 10 mile radius in one or more adjoining precincts *within the county*.

This amendment addresses concerns raised by the SOS about precincts which encompass multiple counties. See discussion in the last paragraph of *significant issues*.

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 317 amends Section 1-6-5.6 NMSA 1978 to require county clerks to establish alternate voting locations for early voting for a minimum of 5 days, including at least one Saturday, in populations centers where more than 1,500 voters reside within a ten mile radius in one or more precincts, are located more than 50 road miles from the nearest alternate voting location in the county including the county clerk's office, and are not served by a mobile alternate voting location.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SOS pays for the ballots and ballot printing systems and tabulation equipment in each early voting location. Adding early voting sites would increase the costs of elections by increasing the number of ballots and systems needed. In addition, costs for the county clerks would increase to pay for additional poll workers. A fiscal impact is expected but is difficult to quantify until the required calculations anticipated in the bill are performed by the county clerks.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

SOS reports the following technical considerations:

Instead of amending 1-6-5.6, it may be more appropriate to amend 1-6-5.7 which already addresses alternate voting location criteria and requirements.

Section D(2) stipulates that one of the criteria for determining whether an alternate voting location is required includes population centers “more than fifty road miles from the nearest alternate voting location in the county, including the office of the county clerk.” Since calculating road mileage could be a labor intensive process for county clerks, it is recommended that the language could be changed to “more than fifty mile radius from the nearest voting location.”

The requirement of a 10 mile radius may be difficult for clerks to make a determination as to whether an area fits within this requirement. It appears from the language of the bill that the requirement could cover precincts in more than one county. It may be helpful to further define that the calculation should fall within county boundaries.

ALTERNATIVES

SOS reports that during the 2014 primary and general elections, Otero and Catron used a mobile voting location to address two very rural areas that would presumably be affected by the calculations stipulated in this bill. The mobile sites worked very well in these two counties and continued promotion and use of mobile voting sites for these rural areas may be a better use of resources than setting up permanent alternate voting locations.

CJ/bb/je