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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**ORIGINAL DATE** 03/07/15  
**LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_ **HM** 117

**SPONSOR** Nunez

**SHORT TITLE** Denounce Mexican Wolf Recovery Program **SB** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYST** Sanogo

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>	\$924.0	\$652.0	\$652.0	\$2,228.0	Recurring	Game Protection Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files  
 Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

### SUMMARY

This memorial requests that the Governor formally engage the United States Department of the Interior and request immediate withdrawal of the Mexican wolf recovery program and relinquish management of Mexican wolves to the Department of Game and Fish (DGF).

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

DGF warns that the fiscal implications to manage the Mexican wolf recovery program would be significant to the agency.

Between six and eight additional FTE would be required; the average salary for these employees would be \$44 thousand, not including \$34 thousand per employee for the first year to properly outfit them. Annual monitoring and management costs including the utilization of satellite telemetry, fixed wing and helicopter operations, plus depredation investigations is estimated to range from \$200 thousand to \$400 thousand per fiscal year.

While some of these expenditures may be reimbursed through various federal grants, the agency would be responsible for all initial upfront costs, annually. Although these costs may be reimbursed from 50 percent to 75 percent (depending on the federal grant), the remaining costs would be incurred by the game protection fund which consists of hunting and fishing license revenues.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

According to DGF, it is “highly unlikely” that the US Department of the Interior will either relinquish management of Mexican wolves to the agency, or provide the state with full management authority. Any prospective management actions that involve the removal, additional release, or the relocation of wolves would be subject to federal direction and approval. In addition, DGF reports that:

the Mexican Wolf is one of the most endangered mammals in North America resulting in significant public appeal and awareness. Its management is subject to intense levels of public scrutiny and civil suits which is likely to lead to increased litigation directed at the State Game Commission, the Department, and potentially the State of New Mexico.

**PERFORMANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Allowing the DGF to manage the Mexican wolf population program will not provide the state with full management authority as all management and monitoring decisions would still be subject to federal-level approval under the Endangered Species Act and other federal laws. The approval process would adversely affect the agency’s ability to respond to and resolve depredation complaints pursuant to statutorily mandated performance measures.

Based on previous DGF wolf reintroduction programs, a significant amount of the agency’s time will be spent on “resolving issues, attending meetings, defending decisions and administering the program to the detriment of other state wildlife projects.”

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