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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Padilla **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/3/15
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____

SHORT TITLE High School Water Conservation Program **SB** 197

ANALYST Chavez

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY15	FY16		
	\$100.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		Unknown			Nonrecurring	PED Operating Budget

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 197 appropriates \$100 thousand from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for the purpose of establishing a high school water management and conservation program for high school credit.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY17 shall revert to the general fund.

PED estimates that the cost of implementing this program would be greater than the \$100

thousand contained in this appropriation. PED anticipates costs for the program to include PED staff, curriculum development, teacher salaries and load, professional development, and classroom texts and materials.

Language in the bill provides for up to 4 percent of appropriations to be used for professional development and PED administrative costs. This would be \$4 thousand under the bill. PED estimates this amount is insufficient to provide quality professional development or to cover the PED cost of staff.

If enacted, PED may need to use additional resources in order to create an effective pilot program; alternatively, the pilot program may be under-resourced if PED elects to not spend additional funds outside of the appropriation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This bill creates a two-year pilot project that creates a one-credit, elective high school course. The purpose of the pilot is to provide preparation for high school students for entry into the work force, vocational, or academic programs related to water conservation by teaching them the basic principles of water management and conservation. The program would be administered by the department, and the appropriation would provide funding for the development of a suitable curriculum for implementation in one or more high schools.

While noting that water management is critical for the long-term viability of the state's industry and livability, PED states that the program may duplicate existing efforts at institutions of higher education:

New Mexico State University's (NMSU's) New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI) is a statewide consortium connecting researchers and educators and is funded through legislative appropriations. Both flagship universities (NMSU and UNM) offer programs of study in water management and in sustainability. Many community colleges offer certificate programs related to water management, such as CNM's water treatment plant operator certification and SFCC's water and wastewater technology training certificate. These programs prepare postsecondary students for entry into the workforce with an understanding of the principals of water management and conservation.

PED notes that high school students can learn about water management and conservation through dual credit offerings at postsecondary institutions. For example, in the 2013-14 school year, PED provides that 94 high school students took a course, "natural resources and conservation" for credit. PED also notes that employers in the field of water management and conservation are more likely to recognize community college certifications in water management than a high school technical course.

PED adds the department's College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) oversees career technical education in New Mexico and administers the federal Carl D. Perkins grant for career and technical education. A major initiative of the Perkins grant is the career clusters initiative. This initiative emphasizes alignment of secondary and postsecondary programs with industry requirements, so that students are well prepared for technical careers. Through the use of aligned, sequential, rigorous programs of study, high school students are trained in basic principles that

align to postsecondary requirements. The department notes that the single credit course as proposed in the bill does not address alignment with postsecondary programs or with industry requirements.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

PED notes the bill is unclear what metrics would be used to evaluate student and program performance, though it requires the department to determine program efficacy and to report to the legislature.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED provides the following administrative implications for the department:

SB197 requires PED to develop an application for high schools to design and implement a water management and conservation course. PED must develop application criteria including establishing standards for curriculum. Later, staff must evaluate applications. Human resources would be required for this process.

SB197 requires PED to establish criteria for qualified teachers and staff. As a career technical course, teachers would likely be licensed on an alternative license. PED's Licensure Bureau would need to create license criteria to determine acceptable qualifications. Alternatively, a science endorsement or a vocational education license with an endorsement in agriculture might be appropriate.

SB197 requires PED to establish reporting requirements for both student and program progress, and report efficacy to the legislature and the governor. This process would likely require changes to the student teacher accountability reporting system (STARS) as well as support personnel to evaluate data, draft and deliver reports.

ALTERNATIVES

Make natural resource conservation and management dual credit courses at post-secondary institutions available to more New Mexico high school students. Or, consider a collaborative effort among institutions of higher education, WRRI, and other related organizations to establish a water conservation and management training initiative to be incorporated into the Perkins career clusters initiative.

KC/bb