

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the OSE/ISC, the New Mexico Legislature authorized the ISC to grant funding and technical support to form 16 water planning regions to ensure New Mexico an adequate supply of water in 1987 (NMSA 72-14-4). The regional water planning program was created to enable regions to locally assess water demand and supplies and identify solutions to meet future water needs. The 16 regional water plans need continual updating to maintain their utility in equipping regions to respond to water management challenges like recent drought and floods, leading to further uncertainty in future water supplies. The state has invested almost \$5 million to develop 16 regional water plans over the past twenty years. The Legislature appropriated a total of \$965 thousand for state and regional water planning in FY14, with \$565 thousand going to OSE/ISC and \$400 thousand to the New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA).

NMFA's Water Trust Board (WTB) considers whether a proposal is included in an ISC-accepted regional water plan as criteria for funding water projects under the Water Project Finance Act. In FY14, the ISC/OSE received a grant from NMFA's Local Government Planning Fund. This bill would expand ISC's ability to work with the water planning regions in updating their plans as well as updating the state water plan per the statute setting out the requirement for a comprehensive state water plan that must be kept updated and closely integrated with the regional water plans.

JA/aml/bb