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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Soules **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/2/15
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____

SHORT TITLE Study More Cost Effective Interim Committees **SJM** 11

ANALYST Leger

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY14	FY15	FY16	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total			Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to House Bill 1

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Joint Memorial

Senate Joint Memorial 11 requests the New Mexico Legislative Council (LCS) to study ways in which legislative interim committees could operate more cost-effectively and efficiently.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The fiscal impact for SJM 11 is indeterminate. If this memorial is passed, LCS would have to dedicate a current staff member or hire temporary staff to carry out the provisions of SJM 11.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the Legislative Interim Committees listing that was last updated September 3, 2014; 17 committees were created through statute, 11 committees have been created by Legislative Council (3 in 2013 and 8 in 2014), one per the New Mexico Constitution, and one by the Legislative Education Study Committee.

SJM 11 notes the following:

The number of legislative interim committees has increased from eleven in 1979, including just five with ten or more legislators as voting members, to more than two dozen in 2014, including eighteen with ten or more legislators as voting members;

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Many legislative interim committees routinely meet outside of Santa Fe during the interim in a laudable effort to allow members to see and hear firsthand the issues facing New Mexico and to ensure that New Mexicans who cannot easily travel to Santa Fe have access to the legislative branch of government;

The large number and membership of interim committees and their robust travel schedules have had the unintended consequence of making it more difficult for many legislators to effectively serve;

Other legislatures have adopted interim committee schedules that group various committee meetings at approximately the same time in the same location to reduce costs to the state and travel time for legislators, committee staff, presenters and the public;
AND

The New Mexico Legislative Council has authorized several studies over the years to examine ways in which the legislative process could be improved, and those studies have resulted in several reforms, including opening conference committee meetings to the public, expanding new member orientation, restricting interim committee travel late in the interim, allowing joint sponsorship of legislation, prohibiting the introduction of identical interim committee and agency legislation in both the house and senate, expanding pre-filing of legislation, improving the legislative webcasts, expanding public parking and allowing members to attend meetings of interim committees of which they are not members.

Based in part on the success of the previous studies and recommended reforms, there is reason to believe a study of ways in which the operation of interim committees could be made more cost-effective and efficient would be similarly successful.

Copies of the memorial should be delivered to the co-chairs of the New Mexico Legislative Council.

JLL/je/bb