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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/02/16

SPONSOR Steinborn/Gomez **LAST UPDATED** _____ **HM** 35a/HEENC

SHORT TITLE Study Possession of Mount Cristo Rey Property **SB** _____

ANALYST Amacher

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY16	FY17		
	N/A		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files
 Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)
 Energy Mineral and Natural Resources (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee Amendment

House Memorial 35 was amended to replace the words “take possession of” and “taking ownership of” with “acquire” and “acquiring” respectively. This memorial requests that the Insights El Paso science center, together with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association, certain state agencies and other stakeholders, work together to consider opportunities and options for a New Mexico entity to acquire Insights El Paso Science Center’s Mount Cristo Rey Property.

Synopsis of the Memorial

House Memorial 35 requests that the Insights El Paso science center, together with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association, also known as “CARTA”, certain state agencies and other stakeholders, work together to consider opportunities and options for a New Mexico entity to take possession of the Insights El Paso Science Center’s Mount Cristo Rey Property.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) notes that there could be some costs incurred by staff time involved in participating in the study to develop recommendations for the future of this site.

Such costs would be minimal and could be absorbed by DCA.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HM 35, as amended, requires the collaboration of the state parks division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department (EMNRD), the DCA, the Rio Grande trail commission; the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico state university, and other stakeholders to study the possibility of a New Mexico entity acquiring the property to preserve the site's natural and paleontological resources. Furthermore, this multi-agency group has been tasked with reviewing the suitability of incorporating the Insights El Paso science center's Mount Cristo Rey property into the Rio Grande Trail.

In the 2015 legislative session, the Rio Grande Trail Commission was created to define and recommend path routes, facilities and enhancements needed along the Rio Grande Trail. The commission is tasked with mitigating challenges and establishing the Rio Grande Trail to run the length of the state from Colorado to Texas. The General Appropriation Act of 2015 endowed the Rio Grande trail fund with \$75,000 to begin the planning and development of the Rio Grande Trail.

EMNRD notes that the commission has heard a presentation in January 2016, by Insights El Paso regarding the Mount Cristo Rey property, wherein the property's attributes were discussed. The Mount Cristo Rey property is located in southern Dona Ana county and is renowned for its ancient dinosaur footprints and paleontological resources. The location of this 200 acre site is a significant scientific education site in addition to being near the culturally significant El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro trail. The Mount Cristo Rey property is a reasonable southern ending point for the Rio Grande Trail.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Both DCA and EMNRD note that some staff time and resources to participate in the meetings with the other agencies, in addition to field visits to the property will be required. EMNRD notes this could be incorporated into the current planning related to the Rio Grande Trail Commission.

In the event the Mount Cristo Rey property was to be incorporated into the Rio Grande Trail, DCA would require additional administrative support such as a new FTE, new capital and recurring operational funding.

JMA/jo/jle