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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54rd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2019

Bill Number	<u>HB125</u>	Sponsor	<u>Sweetser</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.211398.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HAWC/HAFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Food and Agriculture School Programs</u>		
Analyst	<u>Stiles</u>	Original Date	<u>1/23/19</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 125 (HB125) appropriates \$350 thousand to New Mexico State University (NMSU) for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) to provide food and agriculture education and experiential learning grants to school programs to educate New Mexico students about food and agriculture.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$350 from the general fund to NMSU for expenditure in FY20. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HB125 appropriates \$350 thousand in FY20 to the board of regents of NMSU for expenditure in FY20 and subsequent fiscal years for NMDA to provide food and agriculture education and experiential learning grants to school programs. The purpose of this grant is to educate New Mexico students about food and agriculture. HB125 specifies funds may be used by grantees for materials and supplies, and that up to 50 percent of the grant may be used for staff salaries.

The Department of Health (DOH) notes the average age of American Farmers is 58 years old, prompting the need for investment in agriculture education programs, potentially encouraging more New Mexico students to pursue education and careers in food and agriculture. DOH further notes nearly all of New Mexico's 33 counties are designated rural, and lack adequate access to stores that sell fresh fruits and vegetables, making access to locally grown produce especially important.

NMDA notes HB125 would allow the expansion of existing programs such as Future Farmers of America and 4-H.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMDA notes it does not currently have staff to administer food and agriculture education and experiential learning programs. NMDA would need to develop programs to educate New Mexico students about food and agriculture, and would need to staff the programs.

RELATED BILLS

HB315 would enact the New Mexico Agricultural Workforce Development Act to provide incentives to agricultural businesses to create internships that provide opportunities to young and beginning farmers or ranchers to obtain work experience in agriculture.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Department of Health (DOH)
- The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)

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