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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR SCONC ORIGINAL DATE 2/19/19
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____
SHORT TITLE Accessible and Affordable State Parks SB 53/SCONCS
ANALYST Gaussoin

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	No Fiscal Implications					

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB284 and HB303

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

The Senate Conservation Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 53 strikes language in Section 16-2-7 NMSA 1978 that requires the secretary of EMNRD to promulgate rules for each state park that makes each park as self-supporting as possible, replacing it with language that simply says the secretary must promulgate rules for the operations and management of the parks.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Despite an existing law that encourages the department to set park fees at rates that will substantially support the parks, New Mexico's fees are generally lower than surrounding states. The fees are unlikely to change if the language is struck, and the bill will have no fiscal impact.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

State park fee collection suffered in FY18 because of drought that forced some parks to close. About 900 camping reservations were cancelled and the fees refunded. However, the State Parks

Division's nearly 30 percent vacancy rate might also be adversely impacting revenue because fee payment is not being enforced.

All New Mexico parks (other than the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens and the Rio Grande Nature Center) charge a \$5 per vehicle day-use fee and provide free access to walkers and bikers. Camping is \$8 per night for primitive camping and \$10 for a developed camping site. A campsite with electricity and sewage is \$18 per night. An annual pass for day-use for all 34 parks is \$40. An annual camping permit, something the department says is rarely offered in other states, is \$180 for New Mexico residents.

In Colorado, day use fees at state parks are \$8 to \$10, a basic camping site is \$28 a night, and a developed site with utilities is \$41 a night. An annual day-use pass is \$80 to \$120. Arizona State Parks charge camping fees that range from \$15 to \$50 per night. The annual day-use pass for most parks is \$83, while an annual pass that provides access to all parks is \$107.

In May 2018, the State Parks Division announced increases in park facility rental fees, including raising rates for group shelters from \$30 to \$45, large group shelters from \$50 to \$90, and the lodge at Hyde Memorial State Park from \$500 to \$1,000 or \$1,500, depending on the time of year. Other fees have not been raised in 20 years.

RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 284 proposes state park admission be free to New Mexico residents on Sundays.

House Bill 303 proposes state park admission for foster families.

The bill relates to the appropriation for the State Parks Program in the General Appropriation Act.

HFG/sb