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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR <u>Schmedes</u>	LAST UPDATED _____
	ORIGINAL DATE <u>1/26/2023</u>
SHORT TITLE <u>Route 66 Musical Highway Restoration</u>	BILL NUMBER <u>Senate Memorial 1</u>
	ANALYST <u>Hanika-Ortiz</u>

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact			
Total						

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Tourism Department (NMTD)

No Response Received
Department of Transportation (NMDOT)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Memorial 1

Senate Memorial 1 requests NMDOT consider restoring the Route 66 Musical Highway in Tijeras Canyon. The memorial does not contain a deadline for restoring the road or reporting to the Legislature and memorials do not carry the weight of law.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The memorial has no direct fiscal impact on NMDOT. However, NMDOT is responsible for construction and maintenance activities on the 30 thousand lane mile state road network, which includes both state and national highway systems. To perform these functions, NMDOT relies on revenue generated by the state road fund and federal revenues. As such, restoration of the Route 66 Musical Highway in Tijeras Canyon would have the potential to impact those operating funds.

NMTD reported that earned media generated as a result of highway improvements will be

captured by the agency as part of its ongoing earned media evaluation strategy.

The Route 66 Commission (in which the NMTD secretary participates) is seeking tourism projects related to Route 66 in New Mexico. Therefore, the memorial would align with this goal.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

NMDOT is being requested to consider restoration of the Route 66 Musical Highway in Tijeras Canyon.

More specifically, the memorial provides

- In 2014, the National Geographic channel got permission from NMDOT to build 1,300 feet of the "Route 66 musical highway" in Tijeras Canyon.
- The strip plays a short clip of "America the Beautiful."
- Roadside America describes how the highway was heated with giant blowtorches and a special rumble strip was pressed into the hot asphalt just inside the white line marking the edge of the road.
- Audio engineers designed strip patterns to produce the individual note of a song when driven over at proper speed.
- The musical highway was only installed in the eastbound lane of Route 66.
- The New Mexico musical highway is only one of six of its kind in the world and the second in the United States.
- The musical highway has fallen into great disrepair, with a section covered over with asphalt, leaving only a small section of the musical highway working properly.
- The signs for the musical highway have also been removed.
- If restored, the musical highway would have the potential for being a great asset for New Mexico tourism and the enjoyment of residents alike.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMTD provided the following comments:

The "Route 66 Musical Highway" was created by the National Geographic channel in 2014 as one of only six of its kind in the world and one of just two in the United States. This makes the musical highway a potentially unique experience for visitors driving along Route 66. When functional, the highway saw significant earned media (media which is organically generated) attention from not only the National Geographic channel, but also national publications like Smithsonian Magazine, Atlas Obscura, and Popular Mechanics.

A 2021 Longwoods International survey of NM visitors shows for overnight visitors, touring/road-tripping accounts for 18 percent of all visits as the main purpose of the trip.

AHO/rl/hg