

LFC Requester: _____

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2025 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO

AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov and email to billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov

(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Date Prepared: 02.12.25 *Check all that apply:*
Bill Number: HB 352 Original Correction
 Amendment Substitute

Sponsor: Susan K Herrera **Agency Name**
Joseph Sanchez **and Code** AOC 21800
Leo Jaramillo **Number:** _____
Short Title: Magistrate Court Consolidation **Person Writing** Adrian Herrera
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		
0	0		

(Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	0	(12,240)	(321,233.10)		Recurring Savings	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to: House Bill 144 would create a new circuit court in the Chaparral (Otero County). House Bill 148 would create new circuit courts in Chaparral (Dona Ana County) and Sunland Park (Dona Ana County).

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: HB 352 amends Sections 35-1-10 NMSA 1978 to eliminate magistrate circuit court in Hatch, amends Sections 35-1-12 NMSA 1978 to eliminate the magistrate court in Bayard and consolidate divisions 1 and 2 in Silver City; and amends Sections 35-1-16 NMSA 1978 to eliminate magistrate circuit court in Jal; and amends Sections 35-1-20 NMSA 1978 to eliminate circuit magistrate court in Thoreau, and amends Sections 35-1-24 1978 to move the circuit court from Chama to Tierra Amarilla, as needed; and amends Sections 35-1-27 NMSA 1978 to consolidate the San Juan magistrate division into one location in Aztec; and ; and amends Sections 35-1-29 NMSA 1978 to eliminate magistrate circuit court in Pojoaque; and amends Sections 35-1-33 NMSA 1978 to eliminate circuit magistrate court in Estancia.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Annual Cost by Location				
Location	Landlord	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Bayard	UIRC-GSA	\$44,448.00	\$44,448.00	\$44,448.00
Chama	Santa Barbara Builders	\$64,089.96	\$79,170.00	\$81,545.10
Farmington	UIRC-GSA	\$183,000.00	\$183,000.00	\$183,000.00
Hatch	Village of Hatch	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
Jal	City of Jal	\$5,040.00	\$5,040.00	\$5,040.00
Pojoaque	None	\$0	\$0	\$0
Thoreau	None	\$0	\$0	\$0
Estancia	None	\$0	\$0	\$0

This legislation contains no appropriations. Removing Pojoaque, Thoreau, and Estancia circuit courts will have no fiscal impact because those locations have no physical location and have not been in operation for several years. Closing the Jal and Hatch locations will reduce the lease costs for the Judiciary in addition to savings recognized in employee travel, repairs, furniture, and maintenance.

Moving Bayard, and Farmington magistrate courts will eliminate the lease payments for those facilities, which will reduce overall lease costs for the Judiciary in addition to savings recognized in employee travel, repairs, furniture, and maintenance. These savings can be redirected to efforts to improve the court locations in Silver City and Aztec to accommodate the addition of judges and personnel.

Moving the Chama court to Tierra Amarilla will allow the district and magistrate courts to operate in a single building through a cooperative effort between the judiciary and Rio Arriba County.

Combining the Grant and San Juan County magistrate courts will provide the citizens of those counties with modern, efficient courthouses that improve access to justice and are more centrally

located in those communities.

There will be no impact on the number of magistrate judges or judiciary personnel.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This legislation is focused on reorganizing the judicial infrastructure in New Mexico to improve use of resources and improving access to justice.

Eliminating the non-operational courts in Pojoaque, Thoreau, and Estancia has no impact on the public or the judiciary. Closing underutilized locations will directly reduce costs that can be used on other efforts aimed at improving access to justice. These efforts can include justice station placement and expanded hours of operation. Relocating courts to more centralized locations across the state eliminates confusion among the public and pools resources for greater efficiency.

Chama, Hatch, and Jal often have one employee working alone. This is a security concern for these employees and the public. Additionally, if the single employee is ill, attends training, or takes a vacation, these locations will either close to the public or the district will have to send an employee from another location.

Total Cases Filed By Fiscal Year									
	FY- 2016	FY- 2017	FY- 2018	FY- 2019	FY- 2020	FY- 2021	FY- 2022	FY- 2023	FY- 2024
Hatch	18	51	17	33	16	27	14	13	22
Jal	74	86	123	93	91	143	142	70	61
Chama	685	836	694	380	438	339	341	417	460
Pojoaque	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estancia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 144 would add a circuit court in Chaparral (Otero County).

TECHNICAL ISSUES

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Status Quo

AMENDMENTS