

LFC Requester: _____

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2025 Regular Session

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Check all that apply:
Original X **Amendment** _____
Correction _____ **Substitute** _____

Date 2/4/2025
Bill No: SB262

Sponsor: Sen. Pete Campos
Short Title: Citizen Science Projects

Agency Name and Code EMNRD 521
Number: _____
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		
N/A	\$137.5	Recurring	OSF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	\$137.5	\$137.5	\$275.0	Recurring	OSF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:
Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

SB262 makes appropriations to the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the Department of Game and Fish, and the Environment Department to contract service for a program coordinator to oversee citizen science projects in which members of the public volunteer to assist in conducting scientific research and collecting data on wildlife.

SB262 appropriates to the board of regents of the University of New Mexico (University) for expenditure by Natural Heritage New Mexico, a program within the Museum of Southwestern Biology and the Biology Department of the University, to contract for services to oversee citizen science project program coordinators and create and maintain web portals and information systems to track and evaluate the citizen science projects.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

In the 2024 regular legislative session, HM34, sponsored by Rep. Kristina Ortez, and was signed. The development of HM 34 was informed by conversations with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico State Land Office, New Mexico Environment Department, and New Mexico State Parks Division. Each agency voiced a need for more permanent personnel to help coordinate and conduct the vast amount of research and fieldwork related to wildlife and conservation that are needed on public lands and related to each entity's mission. These agencies expressed the need for help in obtaining more data about species beyond what their current staff and contractors can gather, thus making citizen science a cost-effective opportunity to help fill that need.

SB262 does not support the establishment of a full-time equivalent position for each of the participating agencies to establish program coordinators. However, SB 262 does provide an annual recurring appropriation of \$137,500 for each participating agency to contract services for a program coordinator to oversee their citizen science programming.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

On November 25, 2024, the citizen science working group named in HM 34, made the following recommendations to the legislative interim Water and Natural Resources Committee.

- 1) Establish a team of program coordinators consisting of one coordinator at each of the member agencies comprising four permanent full-time equivalent positions to be housed in each of the participating agencies at an estimated cost of \$550,000.
- 2) Leverage opportunities to expand and integrate citizen science-related efforts through partnerships.
- 3) Develop metrics of success and share outcomes from citizen science projects.
- 4) Develop funds for the Natural Heritage New Mexico to support citizen science projects, data collections, marketing, and other related program support services.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

SB262 does not support the establishment of a full-time equivalent position for each of the participating agencies to establish program coordinators. However, SB 262 does provide an annual recurring appropriation of \$137,500 for each participating agency to contract services for a program coordinator to oversee their citizen science programming.

Contracted services are usually focused on short-term projects where an agency full-time equivalent position would be available to provide direction and oversight for the contractor. However, the State Parks Division has no existing agency program coordinator and has no biologist on staff to manage for the agency's oversight needed to support the contracted service provider.

The citizen science program contemplated by HM34 expects the implementation of statewide programming across multiple state public land and natural resource agencies. For these agencies, citizen science, biology, outdoor/environmental education, stewardship, and volunteerism are part of their missions. As a result, a full-time equivalent position established and dedicated to coordinating and managing for this statewide program work is essential for long-term program implementation and success.

SB262 also proposes that the Natural Heritage New Mexico, a program within the Museum of Southwestern Biology and the Biology Department of the University contract for services to oversee citizen science project program coordinators which may cause confusion and conflict with the oversight required by the agencies contracting the service program coordinators.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

None.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

SB262 would better serve the intent of HM34 by supporting full-time equivalent positions for each of the participating agencies as recommended by the HM34 working group. Participating agencies expressed the need to build program capacity by establishing full-time program staff to serve the long-term intent and objectives of a statewide citizen science program.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Appropriations will not be made to the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the Department of Game and Fish, and the Environment Department to contract services for a program coordinator(s) to oversee citizen science projects in which members of the public volunteer to assist in conducting scientific research and collecting data on wildlife.

An appropriation will not be made to the board of regents of the University of New Mexico (University) for expenditure by Natural Heritage New Mexico, a program within the Museum of Southwestern Biology and the Biology Department of the University, to contract for services to oversee citizen science project program coordinators and create and maintain web portals and information systems to track and evaluate the citizen science projects.

AMENDMENTS

None.