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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/27/2022

SPONSOR Zamora/Townsend LAST UPDATED _____ HB 108

SHORT TITLE Statewide Weather Station Network SB _____

ANALYST Fischer

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY22	FY23		
	\$2,578.0		General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY22	FY23	FY24	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total			\$569.0	\$569.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Department of Agriculture

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 108 (HB108) appropriates \$2.578 million from the general fund to New Mexico State University for the office of state climatologist to expand the weather station network throughout the state, including the purchase and installation of hardware for new stations and administrative and operational support. There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed that the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$2,578,000 contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2023 shall

not revert to the general fund. Though the appropriation in HB108 is a nonrecurring capital expense, NMSU reports that \$569 thousand in additional funding will be necessary for operations and maintenance of the expanded network in subsequent years.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

NMSU reports that the state climatologist at the university was created in state statute to disseminate climate data, information, advice, and assessments to state agencies, public bodies, and the general public. The information produced by the state climatologist is important for weather forecasting and determining eligibility of disaster assistance that is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other federal agencies.

According to NMSU, the current network of weather stations is insufficient to provide local weather data coverage throughout the state in a manner to accurately determine if farmers and ranchers qualify for USDA disaster payments.

NMSU received \$922.6 thousand in nonrecurring funding in HB2 (Chapter 4, Laws 2021) and SB377 (Chapter 140, Laws 2021) in the 2021 legislative session. That funding was used to expand the number of weather stations from 31 to 97 weather stations throughout the state. The FY23 LFC budget recommendation includes an additional \$250 thousand in recurring funding for NMSU's Agricultural Experiment Station to cover the increased operations and maintenance of these 97 weather stations.

NMSU reports that the appropriations in HB108 will allow for the installation of an additional 118 stations for a total of 215 stations throughout the state.

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