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HOUSE BILL 130

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY

Jack Chatfield

AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT; CREATING A CLOUD SEEDING WEATHER
MODIFICATION PILOT PROJECT IN THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE; REQUIRING REPORTING; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] CLOUD SEEDING WEATHER
MODIFICATION PILOT PROJECT--CREATED--ADMINISTRATION.--

A. The New Mexico department of agriculture shall
create, develop and administer a three-year "cloud seeding
weather modification pilot project". The purpose of the pilot
project is to demonstrate the efficacy of cloud seeding as a
mechanism to mitigate the effects of climate change and
drought.

B. The public interest, health, safety, welfare and
necessity require scientific experimentation in the field of

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1 artificial nucleation, commonly known as cloud seeding, and
2 scientific efforts to develop and increase natural
3 precipitation of rain, snow and moisture in any form contained
4 in the atmosphere within the state are encouraged in order to
5 develop, conserve and protect the natural water resources of
6 the state and to safeguard life and property.

7 C. The Roosevelt soil and water conservation
8 district and the New Mexico department of agriculture shall
9 enter into a joint powers agreement to conduct the cloud
10 seeding weather modification pilot project to collect data and
11 design evidence-based weather modification demonstration
12 projects using current and evolving scientific methods of cloud
13 seeding and test the relative benefits of those methods and the
14 potential environmental risks.

15 D. All water derived as a result of cloud seeding
16 shall be considered a part of the natural water supply in the
17 same sense as if no cloud seeding project had been conducted,
18 and any water so derived shall not be subject to new
19 appropriations but shall be administered and distributed to
20 users in accordance with existing water rights.

21 E. The act of cloud seeding pursuant to a project
22 funded in whole or in part by the state of New Mexico or
23 authorized by the New Mexico department of agriculture shall
24 not be the basis of any claim of liability.

25 SECTION 2. [NEW MATERIAL] REPORTING.--The New Mexico
.227030.1

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1 department of agriculture shall:

2 A. establish forms and criteria for reporting data
3 and recordkeeping and cause a permanent record to be kept of
4 all pertinent data related to the cloud seeding weather
5 modification pilot project or research related to other factors
6 that may be affected by cloud seeding activities;

7 B. report annually the results of the cloud seeding
8 weather modification pilot project to the appropriate interim
9 committee; and

10 C. make a final report to the governor and
11 legislature making recommendations for improvements to and the
12 necessity of continuing the cloud seeding project.

13 SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION.--One million nine hundred
14 eighty thousand dollars (\$1,980,000) is appropriated from the
15 general fund to the board of regents of New Mexico state
16 university for expenditure in fiscal years 2025 through 2027
17 for the New Mexico department of agriculture to develop and
18 administer a cloud seeding weather modification pilot project.
19 Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of
20 fiscal year 2027 shall revert to the general fund.