

BUDGET CHANGES NARRATIVE

00408 Public Service Commission

Date: 08/13/2012

Version 2013B0100408

Time: 14:53:47

Change Group: A	Change Type: A	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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IT Equipment over \$5,000

Standard replacement or upgrade of IT equipment according to the Commission IT Plan.

Change Group: A	Change Type: A	Change No: 2	Priority: 2
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ND Geological Survey Pass Through Funds

This line item is for authorization to transfer some of the federal funds that the Commission receives from Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to the North Dakota Geological Survey for the federal share of regulating coal exploration activities in the State.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Market Analysis Salary Adjustments - Per 2012 Job Service Study

A market analysis of authorized and requested Commission positions based on the "2012 Wages for North Dakota Jobs" study was conducted. The analysis compared current pay of positions to directly related job service classification codes in an effort to identify salary deficiencies. A high percentage of Commission employees possess skill sets that are highly sought by private industry within the state. The market salary request is to retain these skill sets within the Commission or provide the financial resources necessary to recruit replacements in the state's highly competitive job market.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 2	Priority: 2
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FTE - Gas Pipeline Safety Inspector - Additional FTE request for Gas Pipeline Safety Program

An additional Gas Pipeline Safety Inspector is necessary to meet the demands of the energy development within the state for the rapidly increasing gas pipeline infrastructure, ongoing safety concerns surrounding pipeline failures nationwide, and new regulations from state and federal authorities that place an even greater burden on the existing program.

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Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 3	Priority: 3
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FTE - Paralegal - Energy Impact related workload increase

Additional FTE to assist with legal research on matters related to Public Utilities, Siting, Insolvencies, and Reclamation as a result of the energy development within the state.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 4	Priority: 4
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FTE - Public Utility Analyst - Energy Impact related workload increase

The build out of North Dakota's energy infrastructure requires one additional utility analyst to assist in the development of the State's resources and the effective regulation of utility services.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 5	Priority: 5
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Additional Legal Work - Grain Elevator Insolvency Cases and Reclamation/Abandoned Mine Lands Lawsuits

Request for additional funds to provide the resources necessary for the Commission to defend the interests of the state of North Dakota.

Change Group: A	Change Type: C	Change No: 6	Priority: 6
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Increased Travel Costs

Additional travel budget request based on the increased state fleet rates for the 2013-2015 Biennium.

Change Group: A	Change Type: D	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Hydraulic Soil Probe

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The proposed budget for the Reclamation Division includes equipment funds to replace the existing pickup truck-mounted hydraulic soil probe that was purchased new in 1977 because of equipment age and the recurring costs associated with maintaining a piece of equipment that has been in use for 35 years. The existing probe has provided many years of service with repair or replacement of hydraulic hoses, valves, seals, etc. that are predictable costs of operation. With extended use and age, however, more significant costs related to cylinder repair have been incurred, and it reasonable to expect that both routine and unexpected repairs will be necessary as the soil probe ages. Given the stresses related to operation, it also reasonable to expect that fatigue may occur in the unit's steel frame and welds as it ages. The soil probe is used to check and evaluate soil respread thickness on reclaimed lands and the need for this work will continue for many years to come since it is expected that between 1500 and 2000 acres of land will be disturbed and reclaimed per year for many years. A new hydraulic soil probe unit will allow division employees to conduct soil probing timely and with minimum downtime related to unexpected equipment repairs. The anticipated cost of a new soil probe with a self-contained gasoline engine is \$28,000.

Change Group: A	Change Type: E	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Remove ARRA Appropriations

Remove ARRA appropriations.

Change Group: A	Change Type: F	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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Remove Capital Asset Appropriations

Remove Capital Assets.

Change Group: A	Change Type: G	Change No: 1	Priority: 1
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3% Optional Savings Package

In the event that a 3% reduced budget is implemented, the Commission would reduce the weights and measures program from four full-time employees to two, and change the program activities and goals from testing and enforcement to enforcement-only. All weighing and measuring devices would be tested by third-party registered service persons. The Commission would continue monitoring to ensure that all commercial weighing and measuring devices used in North Dakota and all registered service persons are in compliance with State law and Commission rules.

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