

H.R. 2793, Highlands Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2021

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on January 19, 2022

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2026	2022-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	37	77
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2032?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 2793 would authorize the appropriation of \$10 million annually over the 2022-2028 period for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to award grants to Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania for the acquisition and conservation of land within the Highlands Region. The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$1 million annually over the 2022-2028 period for the Forest Service to assist those states with conservation of farms and forests on private land.

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted late in fiscal year 2022 and that the authorized amounts will be provided each year. Using information from USFWS and based on historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2793 would cost \$37 million over the 2022-2026 period and \$40 million after 2026.

In 2021, USFWS allocated \$10 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for grants to states for acquisition and conservation of land in the Highlands Region. (Amounts in the fund are available to USFWS and other land management agencies without further appropriation.) CBO estimates that if the bill was enacted, amounts authorized to be provided in subsequent appropriation acts would be additional to amounts allocated from the fund; thus, enacting H.R. 2793 would have no effect on that direct spending.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

**Table 1.
Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under H.R. 2793**

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars										2022-2026	2022-2031
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031		
Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation												
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service												
Authorization	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	0	0	50	70
Estimated Outlays	*	5	8	10	10	10	10	10	5	2	33	70
Forest Service												
Authorization	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5	7
Estimated Outlays	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	4	7
Total Changes												
Authorization	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	0	0	0	55	77
Estimated Outlays	*	6	9	11	11	11	11	11	5	2	37	77

* = between zero and \$500,000.

On February 25, 2022, CBO transmitted a [cost estimate for S. 753](#), the Highlands Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2021, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on November 18, 2021. The two bills are similar; however, S. 753 would authorize the appropriation of \$10 million more each year for USFWS than H.R. 2793. CBO’s cost estimate for each bill reflects the difference in the authorized amounts.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Janani Shankaran. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.