



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 8, 2017

### **S. 1514 HELP for Wildlife Act**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
on July 26, 2017*

#### **SUMMARY**

S. 1514 would amend and reauthorize various programs conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) related to the conservation of wetlands, certain species, and fish habitats. The bill also would reauthorize programs aimed at restoring the Chesapeake Bay and would establish a program to conduct research in the Great Lakes Basin. Finally, the bill would authorize funding for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a nonprofit corporation established by federal law to provide grants for activities related to conserving and managing fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources.

Based on information provided by the affected agencies, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost \$741 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$257 million after 2022, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts. Enacting S. 1514 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting the bill would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

S. 1514 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, and tribal governments.

S. 1514 would impose a private-sector mandate as defined in UMRA by eliminating the ability of plaintiffs to seek judicial review of rules to remove gray wolves in some regions from the endangered species list. CBO estimates that the cost of the mandate would fall well below the annual threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates (\$156 million in 2017, adjusted annually for inflation).

#### **ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 1514 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars						2017-
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022
<b>INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION</b>							
Chesapeake Bay Programs							
Authorization Level	0	93	93	93	93	93	465
Estimated Outlays	0	17	44	71	84	93	308
Wetlands Conservation							
Authorization Level	0	50	50	50	50	50	250
Estimated Outlays	0	13	25	35	43	48	163
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation							
Authorization Level	0	25	25	25	25	25	125
Estimated Outlays	0	25	25	25	25	25	125
Great Lakes Research							
Authorization Level	0	15	15	15	15	15	75
Estimated Outlays	0	14	14	15	15	15	73
Fish Habitat Conservation							
Authorization Level	0	10	10	10	10	10	48
Estimated Outlays	0	7	9	9	9	10	44
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation							
Authorization Level	0	7	7	7	7	7	33
Estimated Outlays	0	4	6	7	7	7	29
Total Changes							
Authorization Level	0	199	199	199	199	199	995
Estimated Outlays	0	79	122	161	182	197	741

Note: Amounts may not sum to totals because of rounding.

## BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the legislation will be enacted near the end of 2017 and that the authorized amounts will be appropriated for each fiscal year. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar programs.

S. 1514 would authorize appropriations to carry out activities related to the conservation of wetlands, certain species, and fish habitats. The bill also would authorize funding for programs to restore the Chesapeake Bay and conduct research in the Great Lakes Basin. Finally, the bill would authorize appropriations to fund the National Fish and Wildlife

Foundation. CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would cost \$741 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$257 million after 2022, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts.

### **Chesapeake Bay Programs**

Sections 10 and 11 would authorize appropriations totaling \$468 million through 2023 to fund programs aimed at restoring the Chesapeake Bay. The bill would authorize \$90 million a year through 2022 for the Environmental Protection Agency to continue its Chesapeake Bay Program. The agency received appropriations totaling \$73 million to carry out the program in 2017. The bill also would authorize \$3 million a year through 2023 for the National Park Service to carry out activities under the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998. In 2017, the agency received appropriations totaling \$2 million to carry out the program. CBO estimates that carrying out sections 10 and 11 would cost \$308 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$160 million after 2022.

### **Wetlands Conservation**

Section 4 would authorize the appropriation of \$50 million a year through 2022 to carry out the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Under that act, the USFWS awards competitive grants for projects to conserve wetlands in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. In 2017, the agency received \$38 million to carry out activities related to NAWCA. CBO estimates that carrying out section 4 would cost \$163 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$87 million after 2022.

### **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

Section 5 would authorize the appropriation of \$25 million a year through 2022 to fund activities of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The foundation is a nonprofit corporation established by federal law to provide grants for activities related to conserving and managing fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources. In 2017, the USFWS received appropriations totaling \$7 million to fund the foundation. CBO estimates that implementing section 5 would cost \$125 million over the 2018-2022 period.

### **Great Lakes Research**

Section 14 would authorize the appropriation of \$15 million a year through 2022 to establish a research program aimed at enhancing fishery management in the Great Lakes Basin. The program would be administered by the United States Geological Survey. CBO estimates that implementing section 14 would cost \$73 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$2 million after 2022.

## **Fish Habitat Conservation**

Section 12 would authorize the appropriation of \$9.56 million a year through 2022 to carry out projects to conserve fish habitat and to provide technical assistance to nonfederal entities. The program would be aimed at facilitating partnerships between the federal government and local governments, nonprofits, and private individuals. In 2017, the USFWS received appropriations totaling about \$7 million to carry out similar activities. CBO estimates that implementing section 12 would cost \$44 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$4 million after 2022.

## **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation**

Section 6 would authorize the appropriation of \$6.5 million a year through 2022 to carry out the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Under that act, the USFWS provides grants to support projects to conserve migratory birds throughout the Western Hemisphere. In 2017, the USFWS received appropriations totaling \$4 million to carry out that program. CBO estimates that carrying out section 6 would cost \$29 million over the 2018-2022 period and \$4 million after 2022.

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS:** None.

## **INCREASE IN LONG TERM DIRECT SPENDING AND DEFICITS**

CBO estimates that enacting S. 1514 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

## **ESTIMATED IMPACT ON STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS**

S. 1514 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA and would benefit state agencies by lowering the matching requirement for federal grants that support public shooting ranges. The bill also would benefit state, local, and tribal agencies by authorizing federal grants for conservation programs and partnerships that protect wildlife habitat. Any costs incurred by those entities, including cost-sharing contributions, would result from participation in voluntary federal programs.

## **ESTIMATED IMPACT ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

S. 1514 would impose a private-sector mandate as defined in UMRA on plaintiffs by eliminating the ability to seek judicial review of rules to remove gray wolves in the western

Great Lakes region or in the state of Wyoming from the endangered species list. The cost of a mandate that eliminates a right of action is the forgone income and value of awards in such cases. Because such losses would generally not occur for the types of cases involved, CBO expects that the mandate would probably impose no costs. Consequently, CBO estimates that the cost of the mandate would fall well below the annual threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates (\$156 million in 2017, adjusted annually for inflation).

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