

H.R. 4373, Engineering Biology Research and Development Act of 2019

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on September 25, 2019

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2020	2020-2024	2020-2029
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	1	7	not estimated
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 2030?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 4373 would direct the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to establish a national engineering biology research and development initiative. Under that initiative, federal agencies would provide research grants in engineering biology, develop and validate tools and technologies, support the commercialization of engineering biology products, and conduct related public outreach. The bill would require OSTP to establish an interagency committee—with representation from at least eight federal agencies—to coordinate those activities. H.R. 4373 also would direct the National Science Foundation (NSF) to enter into an agreement with the National Academies to review ethical, legal, environmental, and societal issues related to engineering biology.

Using information from the affected agencies, CBO expects that many agencies are already conducting activities required under the bill. On that basis, and considering the costs of similar tasks, CBO estimates that each of the eight agencies and OSTP would require one additional employee at an average annual cost of \$150,000 each to participate in the initiative and interagency committee. In addition, using information from the NSF, CBO estimates that conducting the required review would cost less than \$1 million. In total, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4373 would cost \$7 million over the 2020-2024 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

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