



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 6, 1999

H.R. 658

Thomas Cole National Historic Site Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on April 28, 1999

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 658 would cost the federal government about \$5 million over the next five years. H.R. 658 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

H.R. 658 would establish as an affiliated area of the National Park System the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in New York. The site, consisting of about three acres of land on which the former home and studio of the artist are located, would continue to be owned and operated by the Greene County Historical Society. The bill would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to execute cooperative agreements with the society, a local nonprofit organization, to preserve the house and other on-site structures and to assist with educational programs. The NPS may also enter into such agreements with the society, the state, the Thomas Cole Foundation, or other groups to assist them in developing and funding art exhibits, resident artist programs, and other activities. H.R. 658 would authorize the NPS to acquire personal property (other than art work) associated with the historic site, and would require the NPS to develop a general management plan for the site. Finally, the bill would authorize the appropriation of whatever sums are necessary for these purposes.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that the NPS would spend about \$5 million over the next few years to develop an interpretive program for the new historic site, restore and improve site structures, perform needed research and studies, acquire personal property, and finally, to prepare the general management plan. Routine operating and maintenance expenses of the historic site would remain the responsibility of the historical society. The NPS could provide assistance to the society for interpretive activities, but we estimate that the annual costs of such assistance or assistance under other cooperative agreements would not be significant. This estimate is based on information provided by the NPS and the historical society.

H.R. 658 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 658 would impose a new private-sector mandate on the Greene County Historical Society. The bill would require the society to administer the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in a manner consistent with laws that apply to components of the National Park System. Based on information provided by the society and the National Park Service, CBO estimates that the direct costs of complying with this new mandate would fall well below the threshold for private-sector mandates (\$100 million, adjusted annually for inflation) established in UMRA, in part because the society already manages the site as a historic landmark.

The CBO staff contacts are Deborah Reis (for federal costs), and Keith Mattrick (for the private-sector impact). This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.