



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

March 18, 2005

S. 362

Marine Debris Research Prevention and Reduction Act

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
on March 10, 2005*

SUMMARY

S. 362 would establish a program to reduce the amount of marine debris (such as plastic and lost fishing gear) in oceans and coastal areas and to mitigate its effects on health and navigation safety. Under the bill, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) would conduct projects to identify and catalogue debris hazards and determine its sources, and to develop methods of removing existing debris and preventing further occurrences. The bill would authorize NOAA to provide grants to nonfederal entities such as state or local governments and universities involved with those activities. S. 362 also would direct the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to improve enforcement and reduce violations of existing laws and treaties that address ocean pollution waste disposal at sea and would require the USCG to develop new regulations on disposal of plastics and fishing gear. For those purposes, the bill would authorize the appropriation of \$15 million (\$10 million to NOAA and \$5 million to USCG) for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2010.

Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 362 would cost \$3 million in fiscal year 2006 and \$75 million over the 2006-2010 period. Enacting this bill would have no effect on revenues or direct spending.

S. 362 contains both intergovernmental and private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). It would require the Coast Guard to issue regulations that improve the disposal of plastics and other garbage by public and private ports. In addition, the bill would impose requirements on the owners and operators of small commercial vessels. Based on information from the Coast Guard, CBO expects that the aggregate costs of the mandates in the bill would fall well below the thresholds (\$62 million for intergovernmental mandates and \$123 million for private-sector mandates, in 2005, adjusted annually for inflation) established by the act.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 362 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget functions 300 (natural resources and environment) and 400 (transportation). For this estimate, CBO assumes that the authorized amounts will be appropriated for each year and that outlays will follow historical spending patterns for similar activities of the agencies involved.

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Authorization Level	15	15	15	15	15
Estimated Outlays	3	17	17	18	20

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 362 contains both intergovernmental and private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. It would require the Coast Guard to issue regulations that improve the disposal of plastics and other garbage by public and private ports. In addition, the bill would impose requirements on the owners and operators of small commercial vessels. Based on information from the Coast Guard, CBO expects that the aggregate costs of the mandates in the bill would fall well below the thresholds (\$62 million for intergovernmental mandates and \$123 million for private-sector mandates, in 2005, adjusted annually for inflation) established by the act.

Mandates on Port Terminals

By requiring the Coast Guard to issue new regulations addressing the processing of marine waste, S. 362 would likely lead to new requirements on port terminals for the handling of such materials. Current law requires ports to either provide disposal facilities on-site or provide vessels with a list of vendors to collect the waste. Owners and operators of the vessels that dock at ports generally pay vendors directly for the disposal of their solid wastes. In issuing the new regulations, the Coast Guard does not intend to reduce ports' flexibility. CBO assumes, therefore, that additional costs to port terminals would not be significant.

Mandates on Vessels

S. 362 also would impose additional requirements on smaller commercial vessels by requiring the Coast Guard to develop new regulations that improve recordkeeping and ship-board waste management by fishing vessels. Under current law, vessels weighing 400 tons or greater are required to keep waste disposal records, and vessels forty feet or longer are required to maintain a waste management plan. The bill suggests that the Coast Guard may make regulations expanding those requirements to smaller vessels. Because the Coast Guard does not intend to make regulations that would be costly for owners and operators of smaller vessels, CBO assumes that additional costs to those groups would not be significant.

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