



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE

May 10, 2002

**H.R. 1370**

**A bill to amend the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide for maintenance and repair of buildings and properties located on lands in the National Wildlife Refuge System by lessees of such facilities**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on April 24, 2002*

**SUMMARY**

H.R. 1370 would establish a new policy governing the use of private concessioners to provide public accommodations and services at National Wildlife Refuges. CBO estimates that enacting the bill would have no significant impact on the federal budget. Because the bill would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply, but we estimate that the changes would be less than \$500,000 a year.

The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector 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. 1370 would require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to enter into agreements with concessioners only through formal contracts. The bill would require that each standardized contract contain a provision allowing the concessioner to provide maintenance or other work directly benefitting the facilities it uses in exchange for paying a lower fee to the government. Any fees that are received from concessioners could be spent without further appropriation by the refuge manager for contract administration, refuge maintenance or improvements, and resource preservation. The new contract requirements would apply only to concession agreements entered into after enactment of the bill or renewed within three years after that time. Current law prohibits the agency from accepting services from contractors in favor of reduced leasing or other types of concession fees.

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

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1370 would have no significant net effect on the federal budget in any year.

At present, agreements between the USFWS and concessioners (including nonprofit organizations) take several different forms, including contracts, special-use permits, and memoranda of understanding. Few of these agreements result in any receipts to the government. The offsetting receipts presently collected (less than \$500,000 a year) are deposited into the National Wildlife Refuge Fund (NWRF), and later paid, without further appropriation, to local governments.

CBO expects that the bill would reduce offsetting receipts and subsequent spending over the next few years because both the USFWS and its current contractors would probably find it advantageous to renegotiate existing fee-generating agreements as quickly as the bill would allow. Because both deposits and spending would fall correspondingly, there would be no net effect on the federal budget.

## **PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS**

The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act sets up pay-as-you-go procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or receipts. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 1370 would result in small changes in direct spending, but these would have a net impact less than \$500,000 annually.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT**

H.R. 1370 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

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