



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

June 20, 2018

S. 2511 **CENOTE Act of 2018**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
on April 25, 2018*

SUMMARY

S. 2511 generally would codify current practices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) related to the acquisition of unmanned vehicles, known as drones, for oceanic research. Other sections of the bill would require NOAA to regularly assess publicly and commercially available unmanned vehicles and centralize the agency's acquisition of such vehicles.

Using information from NOAA, CBO estimates that implementing S. 2511 would cost \$5 million over the 2019-2023 period, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Such spending would be for additional employees to research the purchase of new unmanned vehicles.

Enacting the bill could affect direct spending; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, CBO estimates that the net effect on direct spending would be negligible. Enacting S. 2511 would not affect revenues.

CBO estimates that enacting S. 2511 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

S. 2511 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary effect of S. 2511 is shown in the following table. The costs of the legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars						2019- 2023
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	1	1	1	1	1	5
Estimated Outlays	0	1	1	1	1	1	5

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 2511 will be enacted near the end of fiscal year 2018 and that the necessary amounts will be appropriated for each fiscal year beginning in 2019.

S. 2511 would direct NOAA to implement a program to coordinate the assessment and acquisition of vehicles for oceanic research. NOAA currently uses such vehicles; therefore, much of S. 2511 would codify current NOAA practices. The bill also would establish a new requirement that the agency consolidate the research and acquisition of all unmanned vehicles within one office. That office would assess the costs and benefits of publicly and commercially available vehicles and coordinate their acquisition. Finally, NOAA would be directed to create a prioritized list of projects requiring unmanned vehicles to help it develop an acquisition schedule.

Using information from NOAA, CBO estimates that the agency would need seven employees—three with highly specialized computer engineering skills—to evaluate and procure more and increasingly complex unmanned vehicles for NOAA’s use in future years. CBO estimates that salaries and benefits of \$100,000 to \$200,000 per person per year for those employees would total about \$5 million over the 2019-2023 period.

CBO does not expect that changes in the research and acquisition process of unmanned vehicles would alter the future need for acquiring such vehicles. According to NOAA, the agency currently owns or jointly manages 138 unmanned vehicles and they anticipate purchasing four additional unmanned vehicles in 2019.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

The Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 establishes budget-reporting and enforcement procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or revenues. Enacting S. 2511 could

affect direct spending by allowing NOAA to accept donations of money from private individuals and foreign governments for the purposes outlined in S. 2511; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, CBO estimates that the bill's net effect on direct spending would be negligible because any new collections would probably be spent soon thereafter. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

INCREASE IN LONG-TERM DIRECT SPENDING AND DEFICITS

CBO estimates that enacting S. 2511 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

MANDATES

S. 2511 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

ESTIMATE PREPARED BY

Federal Costs: Robert Reese
Mandates: Zach Byrum

ESTIMATE REVIEWED BY

Kim P. Cawley
Chief, Natural and Physical Resources Cost Estimates Unit

H. Samuel Papenfuss
Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis