



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

May 15, 2008

S. 570

Virginia Ridge and Valley Act of 2008

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
on May 7, 2008*

S. 570 would designate 53,000 acres of federal lands within the Jefferson National Forest in Virginia as wilderness, wilderness study, potential wilderness, or scenic areas. Under the bill, the Forest Service would develop management plans for the proposed scenic areas within the next two years. Finally, the legislation would prohibit timber harvesting and new mineral leasing within the scenic areas.

Based on information provided by the Forest Service, CBO estimates that implementing S. 570 would cost approximately \$3 million over the 2009-2013 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Of this amount, \$2 million would be used by the agency for planning, marking the newly designated areas, developing trails, and preparing legal descriptions and maps. The remaining \$1 million would be spent over the next five years to administer the new areas.

Designating federal lands as wilderness could result in forgone offsetting receipts if, under current law, those lands would generate income from activities such as timber harvesting and mining. According to the Forest Service, the lands affected by S. 570 currently generate no significant receipts but do contain timber valued at \$2 million that may be harvested in the future. Such sales proceeds can be spent by the Forest Service without further appropriation. Thus, enacting this legislation could affect both offsetting receipts and direct spending, but CBO estimates that the net effect of any changes would be negligible over the next 10 years. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

S. 570 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

On July 30, 2007, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 1011, the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act of 2007, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on

June 28, 2007. The two versions of the legislation are similar, and their estimated implementation costs are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Tyler Kruzich. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.