



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 23, 2002

H.R. 4844 **Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2002**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on September 12, 2002

SUMMARY

H.R. 4844 would designate the Wild Sky Wilderness on 106,000 acres of federal lands within the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in Washington and would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to acquire nonfederal lands and interests within the proposed wilderness. The bill would require the Secretary to design a plan to establish hiking trails within the proposed wilderness and report to the Congress on the implementation of that plan. Finally, H.R. 4844 would direct the Secretary to convey to a local public utility district a permanent easement to operate a snow-monitoring device on 1.82 acres of national forest land in exchange for roughly 372 acres of land owned by that district.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4844 would cost \$18 million over the 2003-2007 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. The bill could affect direct spending (including offsetting receipts); therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply, but we estimate that any such effects would be negligible. H.R. 4844 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 4844 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Estimated Authorization Level	7	5	4	1	1
Estimated Outlays	7	5	4	1	1

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4844 would cost \$18 million over the 2003-2007 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. We also estimate that the bill could increase direct spending, but that any such effects would not be significant in any year. For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 4844 will be enacted near the start of fiscal year 2003 and that necessary funds will be provided near the start of each year. Estimates of outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar activities.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

Based on information from the Forest Service, CBO estimates that designating the proposed wilderness would increase the agency's administrative costs by roughly \$250,000 a year. We also estimate that the agency would spend: \$6 million over the 2003-2005 period to remove 41 miles of road that currently exist within the proposed wilderness; \$4 million over the 2003-2006 period to design and implement a system of hiking trails; and up to \$7 million over the 2003-2005 period to acquire nonfederal lands and interests within the proposed wilderness.

Direct Spending

Designating federal lands as wilderness could result in forgone offsetting receipts (a credit against direct spending) if, under current law, those lands would generate income from activities such as timber harvesting and mining. According to the Forest Service, however, these lands currently generate no significant receipts and are not expected to do so over the next 10 years. Hence, CBO estimates that any forgone receipts under H.R. 4844 would be negligible.

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. Designating certain federal lands as wilderness could result in forgone offsetting receipts from timber harvesting and mining; hence, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply, but we estimate that any such effects would not be significant.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 4844 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

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