



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 25, 2002

H.R. 4912

A bill to increase the penalties to be imposed for a violation of fire regulations applicable to the public lands, National Park System lands, or National Forest System lands when the violation results in damage to public or private property, to specify the purposes for which collected fines may be used, and for other purposes

As reported by the House Committee on Resources on October 21, 2002

CBO estimates that H.R. 4912 would not significantly affect the federal budget. The bill would increase both revenues and direct spending, but by less than \$500,000 a year. H.R. 4912 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.

H.R. 4912 would increase fines and imprisonment terms for violating fire regulations on certain federal lands. The bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to spend, without further appropriation, amounts received from such fines to reimburse the appropriate department for certain costs incurred to respond to fires, rehabilitate damaged lands, and increase public awareness of legal requirements regarding the use of fire on public lands.

Under current law, collections of such fines are recorded in the budget as governmental receipts (revenues) and are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and later spent. Based in information from the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service, CBO estimates that increasing those fines and authorizing the agencies to spend them would increase revenues and direct spending by less than \$500,000 annually. We also estimate that any increased costs for prison operations, which would be subject to appropriation, would not be significant.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Megan Carroll (for federal costs) and Annie Bartsch (for revenues). This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.