



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE

October 11, 2002

**S. 2727**

**Paleontological Resources Preservation Act**

*As reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
on October 8, 2002*

S. 2727 would codify current administration policy regarding the preservation and use of paleontological resources on federal lands. (Paleontological resources include fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms that are preserved in or on the Earth's crust.) The bill also would establish criminal and civil penalties for unlawful activities related to paleontological resources.

Specifically, the bill would prohibit taking or damaging paleontological resources located on federal lands without a permit or permission, selling or purchasing such resources received from federal lands, or submitting false records or identification for such resources removed from federal lands. As a result, the federal government would be able to pursue cases that it otherwise would not be able to prosecute. CBO expects that any increase in federal costs for law enforcement, court proceedings, or prison operations would not be significant, however, because of the small number of cases likely to be involved. Any such additional costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Because those prosecuted and convicted under S. 2727 could be subject to criminal fines and civil penalties, the federal government might collect additional fines or penalties if the bill is enacted. Collections of such fines and penalties are recorded in the budget as governmental receipts (i.e., revenues). Criminal fines are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and spent in subsequent years. CBO expects that any additional receipts and direct spending would be less than \$500,000 each year.

Those found in violation of the act also could be subject to the seizure of vehicles and equipment used in connection with the violation. S. 2727 would allow the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to use the proceeds from the sale of such seized assets to pay up to \$500 to any person who furnishes information which leads to a criminal conviction or a finding of civil violation. CBO estimates, however, that any increase in receipts or direct spending from the sale of forfeited assets would be negligible.

S. 2727 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

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