



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 6, 2003

H.R. 1964 **Highlands Conservation Act**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on October 29, 2003

SUMMARY

H.R. 1964 would authorize the appropriation of \$11 million annually for fiscal years 2005 through 2014 for land preservation in the highlands area of the eastern United States. Most of this funding would be used by the Department of the Interior (DOI) to provide grants to four specified states: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The eligible states would use the grant funds to acquire land or other real property interests. About \$1 million annually would finance U.S. Forest Service activities in the highlands area.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1964 would cost \$44 million through 2008 (and an additional \$66 million over the 2009-2014 period), assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues or direct spending.

H.R. 1964 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. 1964 over the 2004-2008 period 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				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Authorization Level	0	11	11	11	11
Estimated Outlays	0	11	11	11	11

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that the amounts authorized will be appropriated for each fiscal year. Of the \$11 million authorized for each year, \$10 million would be used by DOI for matching grants to finance land protection projects in the eligible states. The remaining \$1 million would be used by the Forest Service to continue its research of the area and its assistance to the four states. No specific amounts were appropriated for these purposes for fiscal years 2003 and 2004. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar programs.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 1964 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Enacting this legislation would benefit the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania because it would authorize federal assistance for conservation projects in those states. Any costs they might incur to comply with the conditions of that assistance would be voluntary.

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