



**CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE**

November 6, 2003

H.R. 2489
Cowlitz Indian Tribe Distribution of Judgment Funds Act

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

H.R. 2489 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to distribute certain judgment awards held in trust funds on behalf of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. About \$1 million in judgments and accumulated interest is being held in trust funds on behalf of the tribe; however, the Secretary does not have the authority to distribute the funds without Congressional approval. H.R. 2489 would allow the tribe to withdraw 20 percent of the total fund to assist the elderly and also withdraw the interest on the fund for various other programs to benefit the tribe. (In total, about \$12 million would be withdrawn.) About \$1 million would remain in trust funds, and the interest that accrues on that amount could be withdrawn by the tribe in future years.

These trust funds are held and managed in a fiduciary capacity by the federal government on behalf of Indian tribes and are treated as nonfederal funds. As a result, outlays were recorded on the budget when the judgments were awarded to the tribes and paid into those trust funds. Consequently, there is no federal budget impact when the money is distributed to the individual members of the tribes. Therefore, CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2489 would have no effect on the federal budget.

H.R. 2489 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. Enactment of this legislation would benefit the Cowlitz Indian Nation.

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