



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

December 16, 2011

H.R. 205
Helping Expedite and Advance
Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act of 2011

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources
on November 17, 2011*

H.R. 205 would allow Indian tribes to enter into certain leases of trust lands without approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).¹ Based on information from the Department of the Interior, CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would have no significant effect on the federal budget. Enacting H.R. 205 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Under current law, most tribes can lease trust lands to certain entities for up to 25 years, subject to the approval of BIA. Under the bill, tribes could enter into leases without BIA approval if those leases were subject to tribal regulations approved by the agency. Any lease granted under that authority would be limited to 25 years for agricultural use and business purposes and 75 years for other purposes. Any lease involving the exploration for or extraction of natural resources would still require approval from BIA. H.R. 205 would also authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical assistance for the environmental review process. CBO expects that those provisions would have a negligible effect on BIA's workload.

H.R. 205 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. Enacting the legislation would benefit tribes by streamlining the process for leasing certain tribal lands.

On August 31, 2011, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 703, the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act of 2011, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on July 28, 2011. The two pieces of legislation are similar, and the CBO cost estimates are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Martin von Gnechten. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

1. Trust lands are tribally owned lands that are legally held by the federal government for the benefit of tribal governments or individual tribal members.