



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 7, 2012

H.R. 2706 **Billfish Conservation Act of 2011**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on August 1, 2012

H.R. 2706 would prohibit individuals from selling or possessing billfish (marlin and other species) or billfish products in nearly all states and some territories of the United States. Based on information provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), CBO estimates that implementing the bill would have no significant impact on the federal budget. Enacting the legislation could increase revenues (from civil and criminal penalties) and associated direct spending; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. However, CBO estimates that such increases would be negligible and would offset each other in most years.

CBO expects that the bill would have a minimal impact on NOAA's fishery management activities. Under current law, any billfish caught in the Atlantic Ocean must be released. In addition, billfish are rarely found in the Pacific Ocean off the west coast of the continental United States. Hawaii and the Pacific Insular Area would be exempt from complying with the bill as long as billfish and billfish products from those areas are sold there.

H.R. 2706 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

H.R. 2706 contains a private-sector mandate, as defined in UMRA, by prohibiting the sale or possession of billfish or products containing billfish. The cost of the mandate would be the net income forgone as a result of the prohibition. Based on information from industry experts, CBO estimates that the loss of income may amount to tens of millions of dollars annually. Consequently, the cost of the mandate would fall below the annual threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates (\$146 million in 2012, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Jeff LaFave (for federal costs) and Amy Petz (for the private-sector impact). The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.