



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

August 21, 2012

H.R. 4278 **Preserving Rural Resources Act of 2012**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
on July 26, 2012*

The Clean Water Act (CWA) authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers to grant permits for discharging dredge or fill material into waters of the United States. Some activities, including those related to farming, forestry, and ranching, result in discharges that in some circumstances are exempt from such permit requirements. However, if those activities would impair the flow or circulation of water by filling wetlands, for example, then a CWA permit is required. H.R. 4278 would not require any of those activities to have a CWA permit under any circumstances.

CBO estimates that enacting this legislation would not have a significant impact on the federal budget because it would not result in a significant change in workload for either EPA or the Corps. Under current law, the Corps is authorized to collect and spend fees for issuing permits under the CWA; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply to H.R. 4278. However, CBO expects that the net change in collections and spending under the bill would be negligible.

H.R. 4278 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.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Susanne S. Mehlman. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.