



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 17, 2014

H.R. 5412 **Bureau of Reclamation Surface Water Storage Streamlining Act**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources
on September 18, 2014*

SUMMARY

H.R. 5412 would direct the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to accelerate studies conducted as part of approving or denying construction projects for storing surface water. Under the bill, the BOR would be required to limit the cost and time to complete each study, to construct a publicly accessible database to provide information about the status of each study, and to act as the lead agency in coordinating with state and other federal agencies to expedite environmental reviews necessary to complete those studies.

Based on information provided by the BOR, and assuming the appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 5412 would cost \$15 million over the 2015-2019 period. Because the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

H.R. 5412 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 effect of H.R. 5412 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					2015- 2019
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Accelerating Studies, Planning, and Design						
Estimated Authorization Level	1	1	1	1	1	5
Estimated Outlays	1	1	1	1	1	5
Accelerating Project Reviews						
Estimated Authorization Level	3	3	2	2	2	12
Estimated Outlays	2	2	2	2	2	10
Total Changes						
Estimated Authorization Level	4	4	3	3	3	17
Estimated Outlays	3	3	3	3	3	15

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 5412 will be enacted near the end of 2014 and that the necessary amounts will be appropriated over the next five years.

Accelerating Studies, Planning, and Design

H.R. 5412 would limit the BOR to spending \$3 million or less on studies conducted as part of approving or denying construction projects for storing surface water; those studies would have to be completed within three years. If a study could not be completed within those limits, the BOR would be required to provide written notice to the Congress and any other agencies involved explaining why completing the study would cost more than \$3 million or why the work could not be completed within the time limit.

Under H.R. 5412, the BOR would also be required to expedite studies already in progress and if the conclusions of a study recommend construction of a project, the BOR would proceed immediately to preconstruction planning and design. Typically, the BOR does not proceed with preconstruction planning and design until the Congress authorizes construction of a project.

Based on information from the BOR, CBO estimates that the additional activities required to implement those provisions would cost about \$1 million per year, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

Accelerating Project Reviews

With the aim of accelerating the evaluation of new projects for storing surface water, the bill would establish the BOR as the lead agency in coordinating with states, other federal agencies, and the public to expedite environmental reviews, facilitate early detection and resolution of environmental issues, and construct a publicly accessible database that would include a list of requirements for each study and information on the progress toward completing each requirement. H.R. 5412 also would require the BOR to identify water projects constructed across the United States that were excluded from environmental reviews because they were determined to have no significant effect on the environment. The agency would be tasked with developing guidelines for new exclusions based on the characteristics of those previous projects.

Finally, the bill would direct the BOR to annually solicit through the *Federal Register* proposals from nonfederal entities to build water storage projects and to report to the Congress on the preliminary costs and benefits of each of those proposals. Based on information from the agency, CBO estimates that implementing those provisions would cost \$10 million over the 2015-2019 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS: None.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 5412 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

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