



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE  
COST ESTIMATE

September 6, 2013

**H.R. 638**  
**National Wildlife Refuge Review Act of 2013**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on July 24, 2013*

H.R. 638 would prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from establishing new national wildlife refuges unless those refuges are expressly authorized by law. Based on information provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), CBO estimates that implementing the bill would have no impact on the federal budget. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

Under current law, USFWS has the authority to identify potential sites, perform environmental assessments, and establish boundaries for new national wildlife refuges. The agency can formally establish new refuges by acquiring lands within the proposed boundaries. Under the bill, USFWS could only establish new national wildlife refuges if those refuges are expressly authorized by law. CBO expects that any appropriated funds that would have been spent to acquire lands to establish new refuges under current law would be spent to acquire lands within existing refuges under the bill; therefore, we estimate that implementing the bill would have no impact on discretionary spending.

In addition, USFWS has the the authority, under current law, to spend a portion of the proceeds from the sale of duck stamps, without further appropriation, to acquire lands within the national wildlife refuge system. The agency can use those funds to purchase lands to formally establish new wildlife refuges. Under the bill, proceeds from the sale of duck stamps could not be used for that purpose. CBO expects that any such funds that would have been spent to acquire lands to establish new refuges under current law also would be spent by USFWS to acquire lands within existing refuges under the bill; therefore, we estimate that enacting H.R. 638 would not affect direct spending.

H.R. 638 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 Jeff LaFave. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.